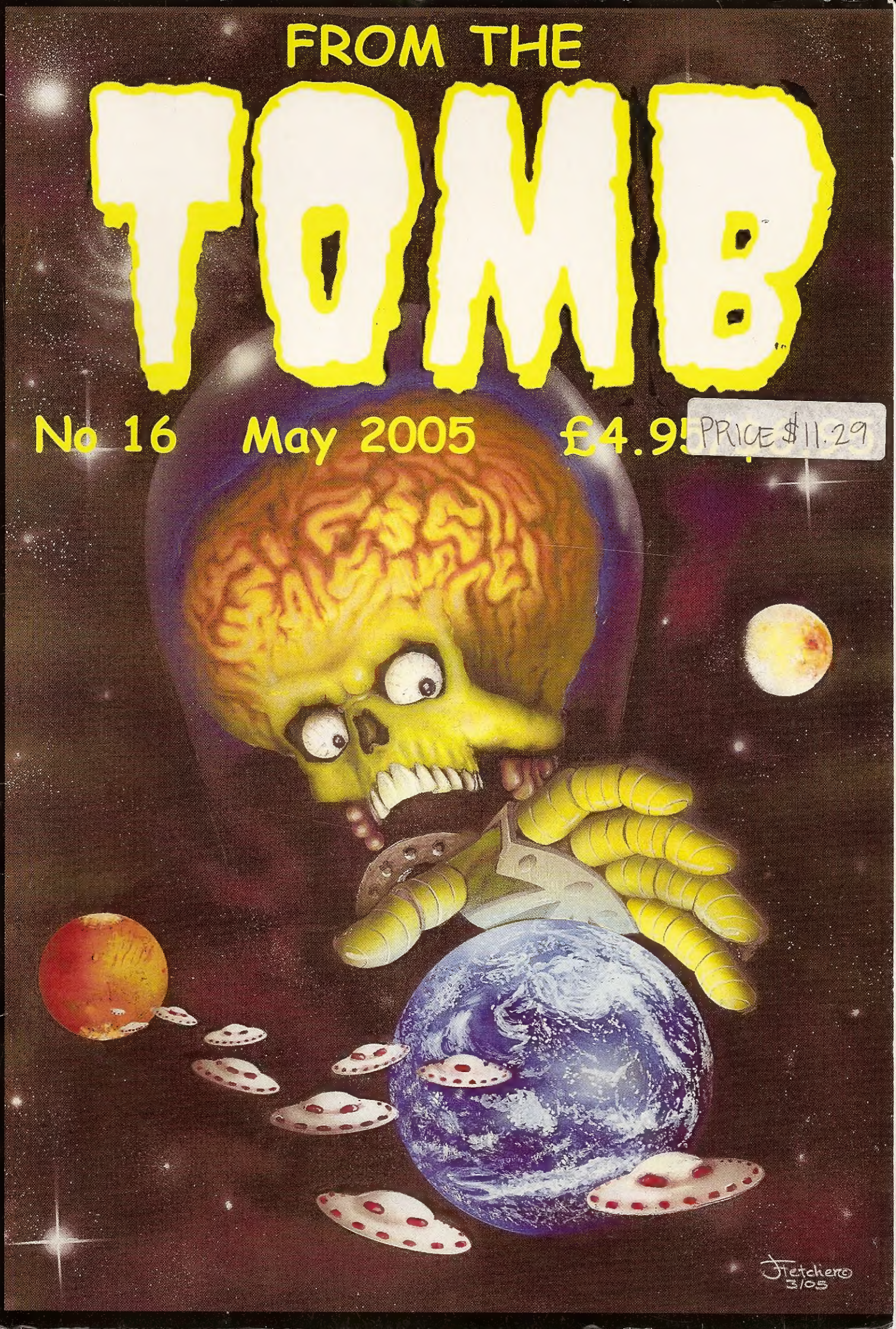
FROM THE TOMB

No 16 May 2005 £4.9

PRICE $11.29

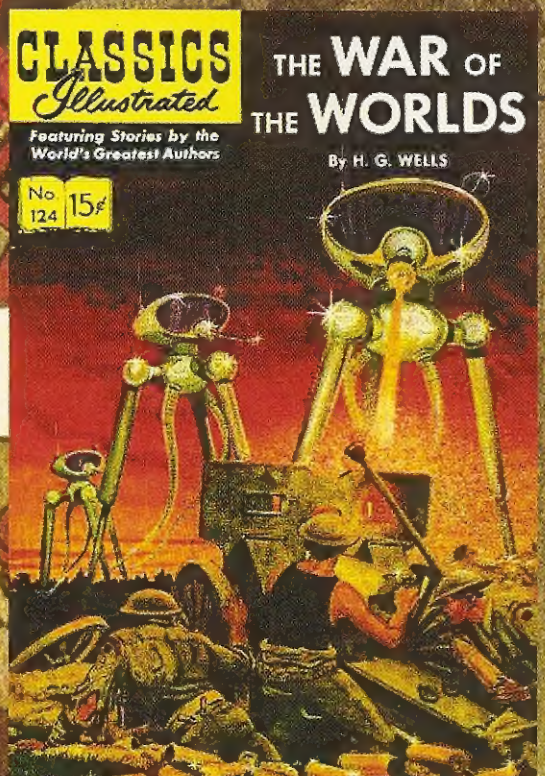


INVADERS FROM MARS

by Peter Normanton

Although its orbit may have carried it thousands upon thousands of miles away from that of our own world, the Red Planet Mars was to provide an unimaginable source of inspiration for those horror and science fiction comics writers who burned away the midnight oil during the Cold War. H.G. Wells had been instrumental in arousing our fears, while Orson Wells' infamous broadcast only sought to heighten these anxieties. There was a threat lying out there in the heavens, although few if any, of us had any notion as to what shape it would eventually take. It was the paranoia so deeply enmeshed in these Cold War years that gave substance to this threat and gave the comic book creators a lease of life they could never have expected.

Science fiction comics in the 1940s were for the most part a series of highly entertaining adventure stories set in the depths of space. Their tales of valour on the galactic front reflected the struggle across the free world to be rid of the warmongering Axis.



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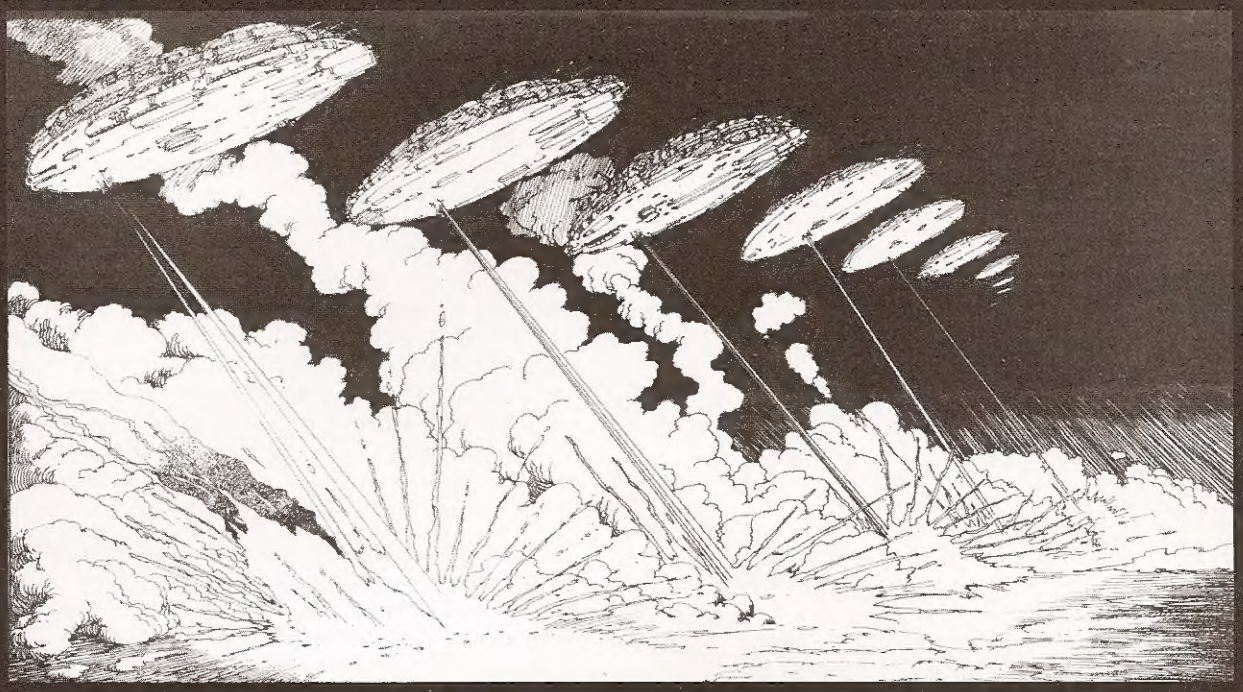
NEW YORK, N. Y.



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NO. 16 MAY 2005

CONTENTS

Invaders From Mars by Peter Normanton.....Page 2
Tales from the Crypt DVD by Jim Vanhollebeke.....Page 11
Smallpress by Peter Normanton.....Page 14
War of the Worlds by Peter Normanton.....Page 17
Treasuries of Terror by Tom Atkinson.....Page 22
Mars Attacks by Peter Normanton.....Page 26
Weapons of Martian Destruction by Pete Von Sholly.Page 34
Commies from Mars: an interview with Tim Boxell by Peter Normanton.....Page 41
Mars is Heaven by Frank Motler.....Page 47
An interview with P. Craig Russell by Peter Normanton.Page 53
The Miller's Tale Part II by Frank Motler.....Page 59
Bad American Comics Presents Lars Attacks by Frank Motler.....Page 72

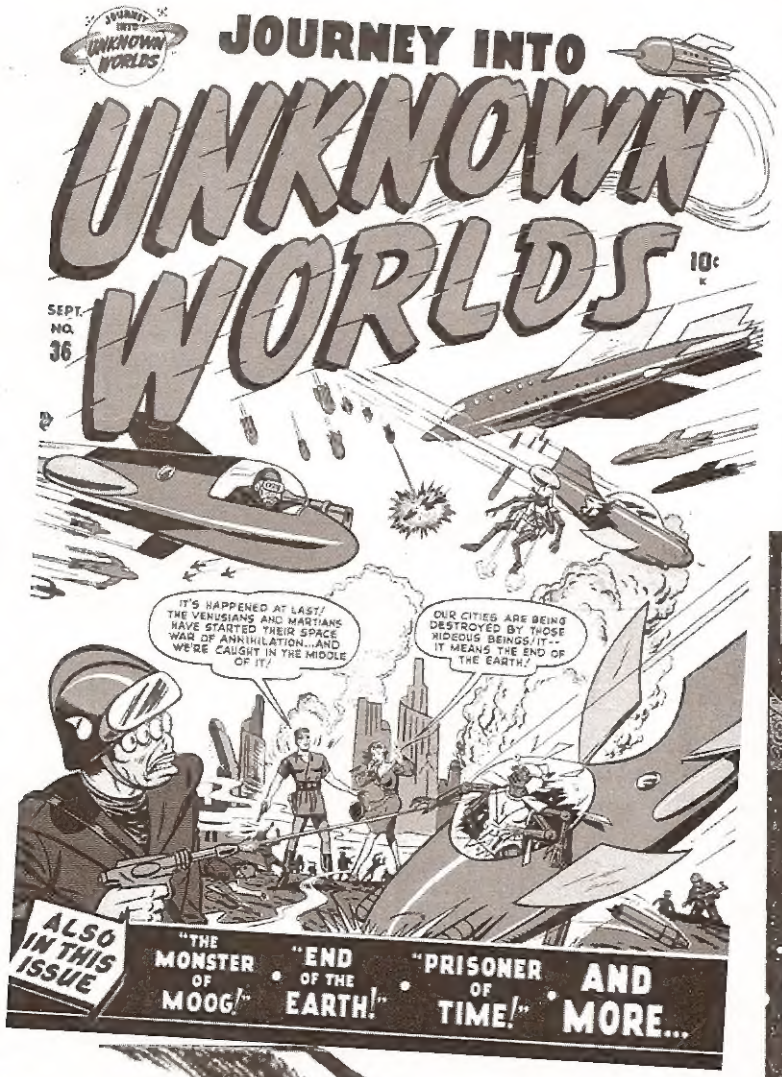
Welcome kiddies to this the most adventurous issue of From the Tomb yet. Seventy-two pages to drag you further into the grave. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has had an input to this issue, it has been really appreciated. Thanks also to James Fletcher who came in late in the day to produce this issue's stunning cover, if you are interested in getting in touch with him he can be contacted at flexographics2001@yahoo.co.uk.

Now unfortunately the bad news, for readers outside the UK. I have had to put the subscription price up to £17.00 for three issues or £7.00 for a single issue. Due to problems with my bank I can no longer take cheques in overseas currencies. You can pay in cash if you wish, this would be $32.00 for 3 issues or $12.00 for a single issue. Postal levies and increased print costs haven't helped over the last six months. Apologies for this I know it must seem like a slap in the face when you have offered so much support. 29.3.2005

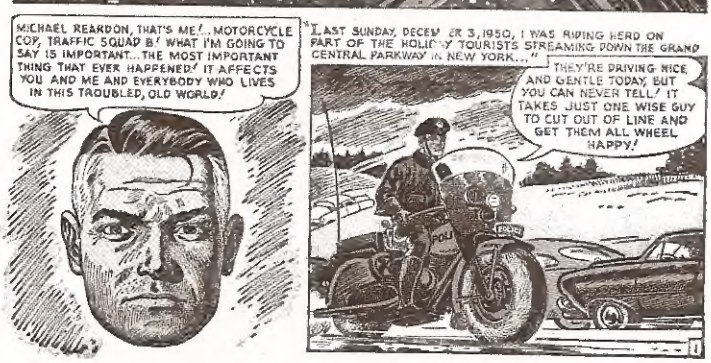
From the Tomb is published
by Peter Normanton,
619 Whitworth Road, Lower Healey, Rochdale, Lancs, England, OL12 0TB
e-mail: Peter.Normanton@btinternet.com. From the Tomb is an amateur non-profit making publication. The contents within this issue are the copyright of each of the respective publishers and contributors.
Produced in conjunction with John Anderson and Soaring Penguin.
ISSN Number: ISSN 1741-8550
Subscriptions: 1 issue in the UK £3.95, outside the UK 7.00. A 3 issue subscription in the UK £11.00, outside the UK £17 ($32 cash) Please make all cheques/IMOs payable to "Peter Normanton"
Back issues are available #1 £1.75,# 2-3 £3.50 #4-8 £3.75 #9 £3.75 #10 £6.00# 11-15 £3.95

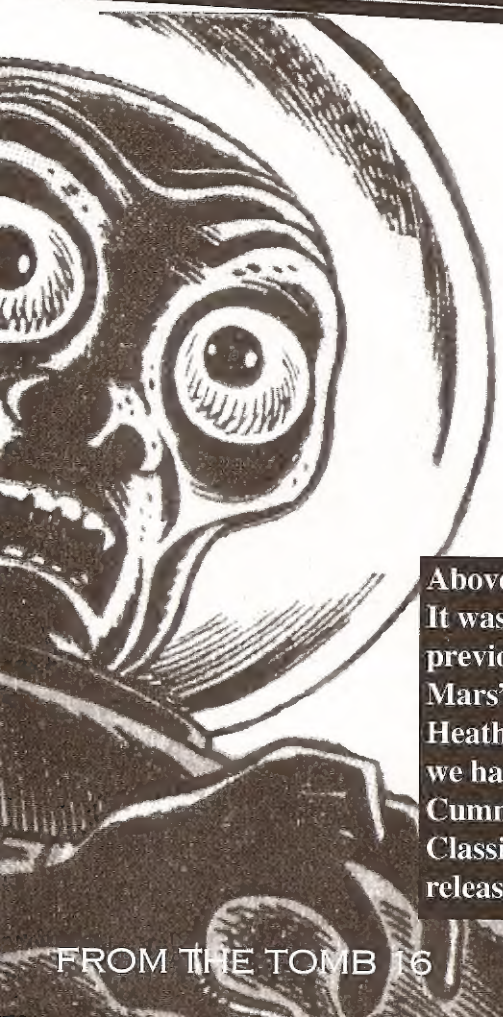
When hostilities in the Far East and Western Europe finally came to an end these comics needed something appreciably different to save themselves from the seeming inevitability of cancellation. Just before the previous decade had readied for six years of brutal war, the science fiction pulps had shown signs of moving to a more sophisticated approach in their story telling. They now offered a grander design to the tales of spacemen and hideous monsters, which until then had proliferated their pages. This refinement was not considered by the funny book publishers for another thirteen years, when Bill Gaines sat and listened to Harry Harrison and Wally Wood's idea for a science fiction title borne out of the tales found in the pages of **Astounding Science Fiction** and its challenging ilk. EC took their first step into comic book science fiction in the wake of the Soviet Union's successful detonation of their atomic bomb. The world was forever changed and comic book science fiction seized onto a lifeline that was wilful in is affiliation with this new age of uncertainty.

It was as early as the September of 1950 when **Journey into Unknown Worlds 36** presented *"The End of the Earth"*, which just happened to be the premiere of what was then a quarterly title. Martin Goodman had published science fiction pulps earlier in the previous decade, but this marked something of a new venture for a company who


JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN WORLDS
SEPT. NO. 36
10¢
IT'S HAPPENED AT LAST! THE VENUSIANS AND MARTIANS HAVE STARTED THEIR SPACE WAR OF ANNIHILATION...AND WE'RE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT!
OUR CITIES ARE BEING DESTROYED BY THOSE HIDEOUS BEINGS! IT--IT MEANS THE END OF THE EARTH!
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
"THE MONSTER OF MOOG!"
"END OF THE EARTH!"
"PRISONER OF TIME!"
AND MORE...

RETURN FROM MARS
WRITTEN AND DRAWN EXCLUSIVELY FOR UNKNOWN WORLDS!
A STAGGERING JOURNEY INTO AN UNKNOWN WORLD!
RUSS HEATH


MICHAEL REARDON, THAT'S ME!...MOTORCYCLE COP, TRAFFIC SQUAD B! WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY IS IMPORTANT...THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT EVER HAPPENED! IT AFFECTS YOU AND ME AND EVERYBODY WHO LIVES IN THIS TROUBLED, OLD WORLD!
"LAST SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1950, I WAS RIDING HERD ON PART OF THE HOLIDAY TOURISTS STREAMING DOWN THE GRAND CENTRAL PARKWAY IN NEW YORK..."
THEY'RE DRIVING NICE AND GENTLE TODAY, BUT YOU CAN NEVER TELL! IT TAKES JUST ONE WISE GUY TO CUT OUT OF LINE AND GET THEM ALL WHEEL HAPPY!



Above the cover to the first issue of Journey into Unkown Worlds, numbered 36. It was early days for Atlas science fiction in a cover very reminiscent of the previous decade's high adventure amongst the stars. The splash for "Return to Mars" from issue 4 of this title is yet another excuse to show off the art of Russ Heath. To the left a Russ Heath Martian from issue 7 of this title. Back on page 2 we have the covers to Avon's 1951 Attack on Planet Mars, adapted from Ray Cummings 1930 novel Terrano the Conqueror. Sitting alongside it is the cover to Classics Illustrated 124. The background illustration comes from Dell's 1938 release of War of the Worlds following Orson Wells' radio broadcast.

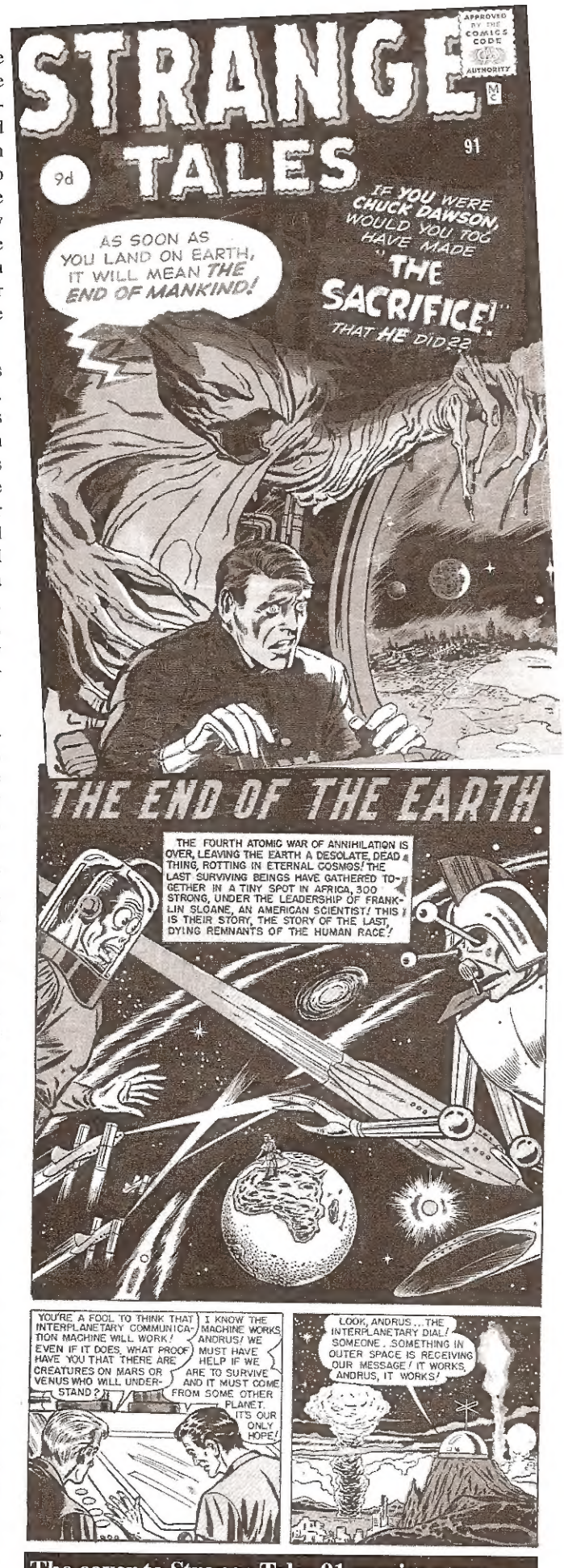
had a habit of capitalising on any trend, which showed signs of success. Atlas were by no means alone; DC's **Strange Adventures** debuted a month before in the hope of gaining from the formula established by **Weird Science** and **Weird Fantasy** in the spring months of that year. The fourth atomic war of annihilation had reached its inevitable conclusion. In the aftermath of the radioactive devastation an interplanetary communication machine was rigged up in a desperate attempt to transmit across the heavens to the inhabitants of Mars and Venus. When the hostile Venusians touched down close to a belligerent gathering of Martians; they assumed one another to be natives, ripe for conquest. Their hasty retreat from the wilderness that was now our world affirmed in the eyes of our alien neighbours an aggressive untrustworthy nature, one that inadvertently saved us from further suffering. A similar idea was later seen in EC's **Weird Science 7** in May-June 1951, although the idea was significantly cultivated.

A few issues later when the fourth issue of this title (April 1951) blasted its way on to the news-stands, the Red Planet revealed the scale of its hostile intent. In only a short space of time this aspiring genre had embraced the Cold War's penchant for rampant paranoia. "*Return from Mars*" rendered by Russ Heath exposed a Martian plot to infiltrate the governments of our world. Their plan was typically diabolical, conspiring to incite global warfare, and then in its wake relieve the densely populated cities of their home world by transporting their inhabitants to an Earth ravaged by war. The character central to this tale whisked away to Mars, Reardon, now returned home, bringing a message that insisted peace was our only alternative. The splash panel seen on this page remains a classic of its kind, as Reardon faces a cruel decent into the Earth's atmosphere. This idea was continued in **Journey into Unknown Worlds 7** (October 1951), when a scientist from Earth attempted to draw Mars closer to our world to allow the Martians to invade in an effort to unite the forces of Earth and avoid nuclear war! There was a lesson to be learned here, an all too obvious one.

While North America sought to assuage its fears, comic books every once in a while veered on an unusually enlightened path. This it must be said was only an occasional aberration; those Martian aggressors were inclined to bring out the worst in us. After only eight issues **Journey into Unknown Worlds** was clearly able to bear testimony to this, but on this occasion Joe Maneely's adroit pencils provided a thought provoking glimpse into "*When a Planet Dies.*" These extraordinarily embellished pages detailed how the will of Anthony Rogers was transformed into a robot programmed to defeat a similar creation from Jupiter in a battle for the Red Planet. The robot from Earth proved the victor, but not content with this success Rogers directed this being to destroy the ruthless denizens on Jupiter. His telekinetic link now severed, the scientists believed their mission to have reached a satisfactory conclusion. As the reader turned the page he learned this assignment was far from over, the robot X-1 was travelling across the void making its return to Earth to consummate its mission. Rogers in true Shakespearean mould, cast his eyes to the heavens soliloquising on the pragmatism of self-sacrifice for one's world, before announcing his Martian heritage. Such insight wouldn't have rested well with Cold War America, but maybe we all had something to learn from our interplanetary neighbours. A similar battle took place in **Strange Tales 84** (May 1961) when Steve Ditko's art gave unusual substance to "*They Met on Mars!*" It's Cold War sentiments were there for all to see, as two creatures battled for Mars, neither realising they were both from Earth. Their space suits were far removed from the EC goldfish bowl years, but then this was Steve Ditko at his most breathtaking.

The notion of self-sacrifice was alluded to in **Strange Tales 91** (December 1961), but with a twist very uncharacteristic of this period. Jack Kirby's cover would have had many potential readers clamouring to learn of Chuck Dawson's "*Sacrifice*", but they were in for a nasty surprise. This was another masterpiece from Messrs Lee, Kirby and Ayers, which revealed how Mars had become an uninhabitable wasteland. The Martians had been forced to flee in search of a new home, their world contaminated by the vapours from a telepathic tree-like being. Chuck was unable to resist it's maleficient intent and had to head back to Earth with it riding alongside him, tormented by the knowledge it would mean the end for mankind. Chuck was a strong man, instead he chose to sacrifice himself and his rocket, much to the disdain of an unwitting group of people awaiting his return. However unknown to them their days were now numbered, the plant creature was still on its way. The futility in Chuck's heroic display was almost unheard of in stories from this period and in the not too distant past may have attracted the attention of the authorities.

Just before the Comics Code made an attempt to disguise the danger from Mars, another facet of the conspiracy, **Journey into Unknown Worlds 32** (December 1954) revealed further meddling from this treacherous world. The machinations


STRANGE TALES
9d
91
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
AS SOON AS YOU LAND ON EARTH, IT WILL MEAN THE END OF MANKIND!
IF YOU WERE CHUCK DAWSON, WOULD YOU TOO HAVE MADE "THE SACRIFICE!" THAT HE DID??
THE END OF THE EARTH
THE FOURTH ATOMIC WAR OF ANNIHILATION IS OVER, LEAVING THE EARTH A DESOLATE, DEAD THING, ROTTING IN ETERNAL COSMOS! THE LAST SURVIVING BEINGS HAVE GATHERED TOGETHER IN A TINY SPOT IN AFRICA, 300 STRONG, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF FRANKLIN SLOANE, AN AMERICAN SCIENTIST! THIS IS THEIR STORY, THE STORY OF THE LAST, DYING REMNANTS OF THE HUMAN RACE!
YOU'RE A FOOL TO THINK THAT INTERPLANETARY COMMUNICATION MACHINE WILL WORK! EVEN IF IT DOES, WHAT PROOF HAVE YOU THAT THERE ARE CREATURES ON MARS OR VENUS WHO WILL UNDERSTAND?
I KNOW THE MACHINE WORKS ANDRUS! WE MUST HAVE HELP IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE AND IT MUST COME FROM SOME OTHER PLANET. IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE!
LOOK, ANDRUS... THE INTERPLANETARY DIAL! SOMEONE...SOMETHING IN OUTER SPACE IS RECEIVING OUR MESSAGE! IT WORKS, ANDRUS, IT WORKS!

The cover to Strange Tales 91 carries a warning and a story few would have expected and above the splash page to "End of the Earth" from Journey into Unknown Worlds' premiere.

FANTASY YOU SAY? IMPOSSIBLE? IT CAN'T HAPPEN? SEE IF YOU STILL THINK SO WHEN YOU DISCOVER WHAT HAPPENS...
WHEN A PLANET DIES!
FIGHT HARDER, X-1, HARDER!
GHRTOI! BHORF! UGOASZXBTI!*
* KILL! KILL THE EARTH ROBOT!
IT ALL BEGAN, THIS STORY OF DEATH IN SPACE, WITH A SMALL AD IN THE CLASSIFIED SECTION OF A PAPER...
N.G. GLOBE
WANTED
YOUNG MAN, STRONG, COURAGEOUS, WITH KNOWLEDGE OF ENGINEERING FOR INTERESTING ADVENTUROUS EMPLOYMENT. APPLY STOKES BUILDING!
THEN, AFTER HOURS OF INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONING, THE CHOICE WAS MADE! ONE MAN STOOD OUT ABOVE ALL THE OTHERS! SUBJECTED TO EXAMINATIONS BY DOCTORS AND PSYCHIATRISTS, THE CHOICE WAS...
...ANTHONY ROGERS GENTLEMEN, IS BY FAR THE BEST QUALIFIED FOR THE HUGE TASK AHEAD OF US!

uncovered in "Dream Girl", drawn by Al Eadeh, were unusually similar the process of infiltration described a few years before in "*Return from Mars*". It was rather disturbing to learn how easy it was for our would-be conquerors to keep us in check. That which transpired had all the hallmarks of a text book seduction, when a myopically challenged fellow close to completing an atomic engine designed to propel a ship to Mars encountered the girl of his dreams. Lara was no ordinary girl, but no one was going to pay much attention to our short sighted fall guy, now incarcerated in the asylum. The asylum as we shall soon see, would prove a useful tool in the Martian plans for the downfall of Earth. They had become all too aware of our frailties, as ordinary men and women found themselves more and more dependent on the growing number of psychiatrists' couches found across the United States and the fact these learned gentlemen were now the heroes of television drama.

These guys didn't just go in for the subtleties of an amorous seduction, **Adventures into Terror 8** (February 1952) written by Hank Chapman with accompanying art by Bill Walton introduced a truly heinous means of conquest in the guise of "*The Parasite*". Rather than dropping bombs on our towns and cities, this introduction to the subterfuge acted as parasite, which managed to become literally attached to its victim, in this case convict Monk Gibson.

By the time **Adventures into Weird Worlds 24** (December 1953) appeared, those schemers from Mars were resorting to more tried and tested means. John Forte gifted his unique style to the six pages that cried "*Look Out For The Martians*". If ever a tale echoed the conspiratorial paranoia of Jack Finney's 1955 novel "*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*", soon after released as a film directed by Don Siegel, this was it, although it can claim to have made its startling revelations eighteen months before Finney's celebrated work. Whilst addressing a science fiction convention, a writer was dragged from the assembly to the mad house ranting hysterically of Martian infiltration. Our only hope apparently lay with the Scanners, a breed not to be confused with David Cronenberg's creation from thirty years on. Enter Sam Taylor, just an ordinary guy, who gets caught up in the fear permeating the streets, completely oblivious of his upbringing on Mars, and his soon to be discovered capacity for subjugating man's last hope. Maybe he succeeded because in **Adventures into Weird Worlds 25** (January 1954) Henry was at the end of his wits, everyone around him seemed alien. We've all had days like this, but Henry soon discovered his fears were well founded. The Martians had been successful in transforming most of the human race. The closing suicide scene revealed the strain was too great for our hapless hero. "*The Men From Mars*" drawn by Bill Everett, may have been a simple comic strip to the outsider, but its disturbing finale was an uncanny reflection of the madness which ran riot during these years.

Just as "*Look Out For The Martians*" had done, **Journey into Mystery 15's** (April 1954) "*The Man Who Was Nobody*" revealed how the Martians' scheming ways had reached such a level of sophistication, they were now throwing their own operatives into confusion. Mr Garlan had become so deluded, he was committed to that favoured Martian institution, the asylum where he faced death before a disintegrator ray. Unknown to him, Garlan had become that most perfect of spies, having successfully undergone plastic surgery and a course of intensive indoc-

IT IS MORE THAN A TEST OF STRENGTH BETWEEN THE TWO ROBOTS! NOW IT IS A QUESTION OF WHOSE WILL IS THE STRONGER --ROGERS' OR THE CREATURE OF JUPITER...
HOW IS HIS PULSE?
AMAZING! A LESSER MAN WOULD HAVE COLLAPSED LONG AGO!
NOW! NOW! ALL YOUR STRENGTH-- USE IT! NOW NOW!
AND X-1 OBEYS!
GEEE-EEE-EEK! RAAAAAKH!
CRASH
LIKE A GIGANTIC COLOSSUS, X-1 RAISES ITS ARMS OF GLEAMING STEEL TO THE SKIES IN VICTORY OVER THE WRECKED SHAMBLES OF THE JUPITERIAN!
GOOD! BUT YOU'RE NOT THRU YET! HERE IS WHAT YOU MUST DO NOW...
OFF INTO SPACE STREAKS THE GREAT ROBOT--BUT NOT TOWARD EARTH! ITS DESTINATION NOW IS-- JUPITER...
A SICKENING SOUND OF COLLAPSING WALLS AND...
AEEEEEH! XSCELTP!
KILL! DESTROY! KILL THE JUPITERIANS AND ALL THEIR CIVILIZATION!
WHAT'S HE DOING, DOCTOR? HE'S GOING TOO FAR!
LET HIM ALONE! ROGERS IS INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO HANDLE THIS HIMSELF! HE MUST KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING!

trination. The horror behind the conspiratorial nature of this story was brought to an unsettling conclusion when his people obliterated his records held on Mars, thus ensuring no one would ever learn of his shrouded existence.

We were never given a reason for this hostility emanating from our Martian neighbours, well not until **Uncanny Tales 14** (November 1953). While the comic books of the day pandered to, or dare I day exploited, the paranoia rife across the North American continent, "*The Hidden Martians*" endeavoured to uncover their untold plight. Dick Ayers produced the artwork for this tale in characteristic style, a style synonymous with the Atlas way of making comic books. Its content proved very much at odds with so many of its pre-Code counterparts. Centuries on into the future, in the year 2650, the Martians still harboured desires for the conquest of the Earth, however this time it was their world which had seen its resources greedily plundered and its citizens defiled by colonists from Earth. The scenario had a familiar ring in the years following the war, as "*The Hidden Martians*" would have ap-

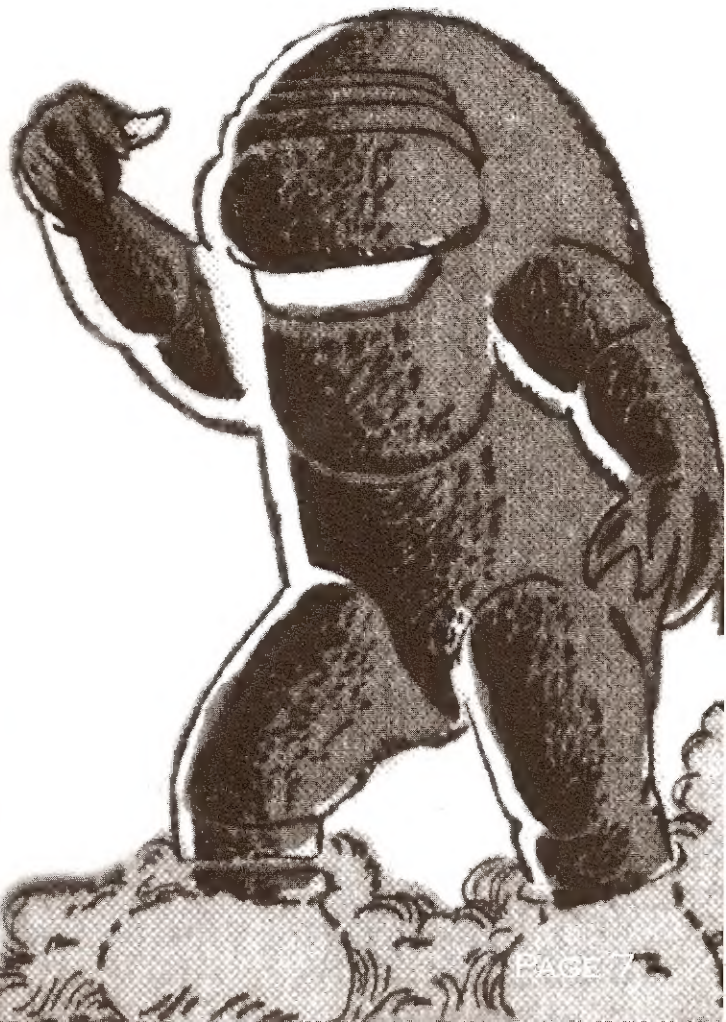
peared against a backdrop of much unrest in the former colonies of Western Europe in both Africa and the Far East. Recently married Bill Hamilton had been assigned to scan the Martian ship departing Marsport. This hapless fellow soon discovered a Martian amongst his fishing buddies. Thankfully for him he was knocked out, and never heard his wife's message to the Martians paving the way for their attack, nor did he discover his beloved was their leader. The art of seduction had once again come to the fore in the Martian's arsenal of weaponry.

Before moving on I had to mention the Martian invasion tale from **Tales to Astonish 25** (November 1961), if only for the title, "*Behold Him! He is the Martian!*" This neo biblical proclamation concealed an espionage thriller focused on our humble world, and the predictably superior powers of Mars and Jupiter. Even though these pages contained the artistry of Jack Kirby and Dick Ayers, this issue was dwarfed by the premiere of the legendary Fantastic Four, but hopefully this theological attestation will one day make it one to remember.

Prior to these insidiously orchestrated examples of Martian aggression, there came first contact. This took on many forms, with some of the finest moments coming unusually after the introduction of the Comics Code. **Journey into Mystery 52** (May 1959) revealed the "*Menace From Mars!*" a tale which gave us the splendour of Jack "King" Kirby's vision of what would one day be fabled Asgard, a domain destined to appear in the pages of this title just a few years hence. It was the year 2306, the year of man's first flight to the Red Planet. This first meeting was plagued with danger for the Martians had been discovered to be a highly advanced but war-like species. There was also ample evidence to suggest they had designs on our innocuous sphere. The hero Hamilton, may have had a seemingly puny frame, but it concealed a mind capable of outwitting our fear-

HE IS ATTACKING! I KNEW HE WAS HOSTILE!
THIS IS MADNESS! WHY SHOULD I FIGHT AN UNKNOWN CREATURE?
I'LL RETURN TO THE SAFETY OF MY SHIP UNTIL HE IS GONE!
HE FLEES! I HAVE WON!
HAH! SEE HIM DEPART! HE DARED NOT DEFY ME! THIS PLANET IS MINE!
LET HIM RETURN TO WHATEVER STRANGE WORLD HE CAME FROM! IN THE MEANTIME, I CLAIM ALL OF MARS FOR--
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM! THE RED PLANET IS NOW A RED SATELLITE!!

WE'RE SURE YOU MUST BE AS KEEN ON SCIENCE FICTION YARNS AS WE ARE, SO WE'VE COOKED UP A TERRIFIC WEIRDIE FOR YOU TO WIND UP THE PROCEEDINGS IN THIS ISSUE! BETTER PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO WHAT SAM HAS TO SAY...'CAUSE HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT!
LOOK OUT for the MARTIANS
DID YOU EVER SEE A THING LIKE THIS BEFORE? IT'S A MARTIAN! NO, DON'T SMILE! YOU MIGHT SEE ONE... I DID!
I'M NOT KIDDING! AND IT WAS FUNNY THAT IT SHOULD HAPPEN TO ME! I'M JUST AN ORDINARY GUY... MY NAME IS SAM TAYLOR! I'M A SALESMAN --HARDWARE IS MY LINE--
I'M ON THE ROAD A LOT THAT IS HOW COME I WAS IN PHILLY AND FOUND OUT ABOUT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION THERE OF THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN CLUBS..
"MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF SCIENCE FICTION FAN CLUBS TO BE HELD AT CONVENTION HALL TONIGHT AT 8:30! SPEAKERS TO BE WELL-KNOWN S.F. WRITERS..."
TERRIFYING MYSTERY FROM A WEIRD WORLD!
JOHN FORTE



I couldn't resist using two pages from Joe Maneely's artistry on "When a Planet Dies!" from Journey into Unknown Worlds 8. On this page we have the majesty of Steve Ditko from Strange Tales 84 "They Met on Mars!" and the splash to Adventure in to Weird Worlds paranoiac "Look Out For The Martians!"

FIND ANY?
NO! WE MUST HAVE HIT SOME OF THEM! I DON'T LIKE IT! LET'S GET BACK TO CAMP!
THEY KEPT CLOSE, THEIR EYES WARY AND SCANNING EVERY SHADOW...
OLD PETE'S GONE!
THE MARTIANS GOT HIM! THAT SETTLES IT! STRIKE CAMP!
LEAVE SOME STORES JUST IN CASE THE OLD MAN GETS AWAY! WHAT REPORT SHALL WE MAKE, BAIRD?
MARS CANNOT BE SETTLED! IT IS INHABITED BY STRANGE, HOSTILE CREATURES WHO CAN DISAPPEAR AND CAN'T BE INJURED BY OUR WEAPONS!
OLD PETE WAS ENJOYING HIMSELF IN THE ENVIRONMENT HE KNEW SO WELL...
YUP, THERE'S NOTHIN' LIKE THE DESERT...AN' THEY'RE ALL ALIKE! WHAT'S THAT?
SUDDENLY PETE BEGAN TO LAUGH UNTIL THE TEARS RAN DOWN HIS CHEEKS
HE, HE, HE! THOSE MARTIANS THEY BEEN SO BOTHERED ABOUT WERE ONLY MIRAGES...REFLECTED IMAGES OF THEMSELVES! AIN'T NO MARTIANS HERE!
THEY SCARED THEMSELVES AWAY! POOR LADS! WELL, THERE'LL BE OTHERS COME, WILLIN' TO FIGHT FOR A NEW FRONTIER! AN' THEY'LL FIND A LAND RICH IN MINERALS, AN' THEY'LL STAY!
I'LL BE WAITIN' FOR 'EM TO CHASE AWAY THEIR FEARS! COME TO THINK OF IT, THEY WILL FIND A MARTIAN... ME, THE ONLY AN' ORIGINAL INHABITANT OF MARS!
ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN UNUSUAL STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER ATLAS

AS LONG AS WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF MARS...LET'S JOIN THESE DARING YOUNG MEN ON THE PLANET ITSELF AND SEE WHAT'S COOKING WITH THE CREW! WHEN YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS UP THERE, YOU'LL WANT TO TURN IN YOUR SPACE HELMET!
PEEK-A-BOO
IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN, CRAFTON, HURRY! WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK INTO THE ROCKET SHIP! THOSE MARTIAN CREATURES ARE CLOSING IN ON US! AND THEY'RE THROWING SOMETHING!
ONE SECOND MORE, PROFESSOR BRANT! I MUST GET SOME SPECIMENS FROM THIS PLANET...A STONE... A PLANT...ANYTHING! OR ELSE THIS TRIP SPONSORED BY THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE A COMPLETE FAILURE!
IN 1927, THE WORLD WAS AMAZED AT THE NEWS THAT CHARLES LINDBERGH HAD FLOWN NONSTOP FROM NEW YORK TO PARIS! THE WORLD WAS AGAIN ASTOUNDED IN 1949 WHEN AN ARMY SUPERFORTRESS FLEW AROUND THE GLOBE IN 94 HOURS! AND NOW IN 1973 THE WORLD MARVELS AT THE NEWS THAT THE FIRST ROCKET SHIP HAS REACHED THE PLANET MARS!
A TALE OF MYSTERY TO HOLD YOU SPELLBOUND!
OWWW!
PROFESSOR BRANT! LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING TO CRAFTON!
HE...HE'S MELTING AWAY!
HE...HE'S GONE!

some neighbours, thus affirming mental resilience to be more than a match for muscle bound aggression; a theme so much enjoyed in the years leading to the Marvel Age of heroes. A little more than two years later **Journey into Mystery 73** (October 1961) used the title "*Menace From Mars*" drawn by Don Heck. Earth was saved by an altogether fine chap's politeness. The would-be Martians invaders never observed him being returned to the sanatorium; but who knows, maybe they did, paving the way for future permeation.

"*Only One is Human!*" from the pages of **Tales of Suspense 22** (October 1961) witnessed man's not so cordial introduction to the denizens of Mars, again in a tale rendered by time served Don Heck. Good will was thin on the ground as this engagement quickly deteriorated into a state of war. In a reversal of Wells' original narrative, it was man who learned he was threatened by a virus; this time carried by the Martians. To aggravate the situation further this breed of Martian could also assume human form, allowing them an easy means of infiltration. Their presence was only detected when it was discovered they could not cry; a subtle flaw very much in keeping with the Marvel house style of the time.

Sooner or later it had to happen. **Tales to Astonish 3** (May 1959) announced "*I Discovered the Men From Mars!*" principally for the Cold War year of 1990 to reveal a Communist plot to gain entry to the United States disguised as aliens. Their plans were thwarted following an encounter with a genuine extra-terrestrial vessel leaving our sphere. The very idea of Commies from Mars seemed like just too good an opportunity to miss! Twelve months before the Comics Code sanitised comic books, **Spellbound 19** (February 1954) managed to combine the first trip to Mars with the downfall of Communism in "*Peek-a Boo!*" showcasing Bob Powell at his finest. This was the world of 1973, I hope you didn't forget. With this mission facing disaster; one man dead, melted away in a four panel sequence which could have only been crafted in a comic from this era, the remaining crew make a hasty escape from the horrors of the Martian home world. Their panic blinded them to the presence of a strange cylinder, which once they returned to Earth was placed under the highest possible security. Then began the Cold War espionage and the final downfall of the Communist leadership. It's hard to imagine but all this was crammed into a mere five pages, they sure don't make them like that any more.

Misgivings surrounding the over population of Earth referred to in **Uncanny Tales 14** gave further cause for concern in **Astonishing 43's** "*Man Alone!*" (November 1955). A solution appeared at hand as a vessel voyaged to Mars to assess its feasibility for colonisation. For some inexplicable reason the crew, whose uniforms bore an uncanny resemblance to those worn by the previously mentioned Fantastic Four, were obliged to

AND AFTER THE SPY TELLS HIS CHIEF WHAT HE HAS OBSERVED FOR MANY WEEKS...
BUT WHAT ARE THEY WORKING ON? WHAT EQUIPMENT HAS ARRIVED AT THE LAB? IS IT A WEAPON... A BOMB? OR A PLANE ...OR WHAT?
I... I... DON'T KNOW, COMRADE!
THEN YOU MUST FIND OUT, PIG! YOU MUST GET INSIDE! FROM THE OUTSIDE YOU CAN LEARN NOTHING!
OW-W! BUT... BUT THE PLACE IS GUARDED! ONLY THE SCIENTISTS AND A FEW WORKERS ARE PERMITTED INSIDE!

take along an old prospector. Only he had the wherewithal to see there were no Martians anywhere on this world, only an unusual mirage which prompted the crew to flee. The old prospector was now left to explore this untouched terrain in a tale possibly reminiscent of Ray Bradbury's writings. This influence was again evident a couple of months later in **Marvel Tales 142**. "*Man on Mars!*" rendered by Paul Reinman, told of the first expedition to Mars and how each crewmember's preconception of what to expect on this world was shown to be entirely accurate.

Yet another landing on Mars was detailed in **Journey into Mystery 60** (September 1960). "*I Turned into a ... Martian!*" was another of those amazing titles that could have only come from a pre-superhero Marvel. Stan Lee did have a knack for this kind of thing! Steve Ditko's artistry proved unassailable as he embellished the plight of an astronaut transformed into the semblance of a Martian who sought to absorb his form. The infiltration process, it would appear, rated very highly on the Red Planet's agenda. Once they had become immersed into our day to day life they could be rid of our scientists, not just by murdering them in the asylums, but by taking them back to Mars. Bill Everett's art played its part in **Astonishing 37's** (February 1955) "*And Then...Mars!*" when Mr Mishon employed the greatest minds of the day to build a rocket destined for Mars. Once the rocket left the Earth's orbit the blue prints were noticeably conspicuous by their absence, and the world's leading scientists were stranded on Mars with the mysterious Mr. Mishon. Our fate appeared once again sealed!

Even to the most casual observer it did look as if our two races were beyond compatibility, now try to imagine the not so subtle differences inherent to our respective metabolisms! Why didn't Jason Gibbs take this into account when he headed to Mars intent on a potion to give a guy good looks! **Journey into Mystery 54** (September 1959), played host to "*My Other Face*" drawn by Al Williamson, whose art in these pages harked back to the legendary Flash Gordon and gave the word handsome a whole new meaning. Al had a found a welcome home at Atlas following the demise of EC. **Astonishing 57** (January 1957) combined his and Roy Krenkel's monumental vision in the "*The Unknown Ones.*" In only four pages their work did so much to enrich this issue in a tale at odds with so many of the stories discussed in this piece. Love was seen to flourish between two individuals, one from Earth the other from the highly developed world of Mars. Amidst the sublime Martian architecture hope was still a possibility. The Martians were again portrayed as a highly evolved race in Charlton's **Outer Space 22** (May 1959). "*The Martian Wager*" revealed their initiatory steps into our solar system; their quest, to discover life on Venus. If only they had embarked on this journey a matter of weeks earlier, for Venus was a world dominated by two nations griped by Cold War, a situation soon to spiral out of control and explode into global catastrophe. If this tale had shown the Martians as grotesque alien creatures maybe it would have evoked a greater response, but in their humanoid form the impact was somewhat diluted, like so many of these post-Code tales.

Charlton's foray with science fiction had begun with **Space Adventures** in the July of 1952. It would have been no surprise to find a team of heroes defending our world, the Space Rangers, engaged in battle with "*The Madman of Mars*" in the far off year of 2552. Earth no longer went by its aeons old name, it was now Minerva, the jewel of our solar system. The villain of the piece Nucleo looked to have be another product of the Soviet military. It was pretty standard fodder, running along similar lines to Atlas's Space Squadron who were championing or cause around five centuries before, although Charlton's stories never quite had the same degree of sophistication.

WORKERS? WELL, ARE WE NOT WORKERS? YES...AND WE HAVE COMRADES IN HIGHER PLACES WHO CAN GET YOU A JOB IN THE LAB ...AS A JANITOR!
YES, COMRADE... THEN I WILL FIND OUT WHAT THEIR GREAT SECRET IS!

When "*The Death Sentence*" was announced in **Adventures into Mystery 4** (January 1957) any hopes for our future seemed dashed. A guide standing accused of the murder of his client, told the tale of venturing into a cave and discovering a machine constructed on Mars which maintained a record of the Earth's history. There was no need to worry however, the Martians were a benevolent race, ready to welcome the people of Earth into the Atomic Age. The Doctor's death was an unfortunate accident, but the judge was left incredulous, refusing to accept his account. As the convicted guide was led from the court Martian spaceships began to fill the skies. Maybe that expectation of hope was short lived as further evidenced in "*Crisis!*" from **Mystery Tales 46** (October 1956) drawn by Don Heck at an early stage in his time with the company. Earth was poised to receive its first visitation from Mars. However a debate ensued as to the true nature of Martian intentions. Typically the military regarded them as a threat and insisted on wiping them out of the skies, whereas the more diplomatic considered this a great opportunity. The military won the day, but victory proved short lived as they engaged the Martians using atomic weaponry and frightened them away. Forget the celebrations this was far from being our finest moment, the Martians were prepared to offer friendship and advancements to the quality of our lives that were beyond our comprehension. What was I saying about hope!

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
52 MAY
10¢
CAN ONE LONE EARTHMAN STOP THE AWESOME "INVASION FROM OUTER SPACE!"
PUNY EARTHLING! OUR WEAPONS AND MEN ARE FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN YOURS! THERE IS NO WAY YOU CAN STOP OUR INVASION OF EARTH!
Also...YOU WILL MEET "THE MAN WITH THE ATOMIC BRAIN!"

Across the page those Fantastic Four look-alikes from Astonishing 43's "Man Alone!" plus the amazing splash by Bob Powell from Spellbound 19 and Communist treachery that followed it. Above Jack Kirby's cover to Journey into Mystery 52 that hinted at a Martian link to fabled Asgard.

The explosion of the Soviet Union's first atomic device in 1949 did far more than the world could have counted on. It saw a return of the long forgotten fears H.G. Wells had first written of and Orson Wells broadcast had taken such macabre delight in. The "*reds under the bed*" syndrome didn't necessarily come from Moscow, it may have travelled thousands of miles through space; armed with weaponry the Iron Curtain could have only dreamed of. As for our neighbours from Mars, they now had a foothold in comics, one they weren't going to go back on.

FIN.

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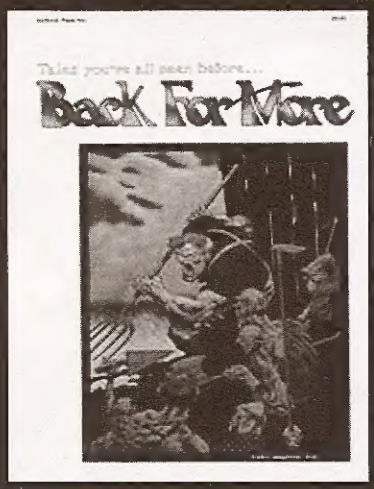

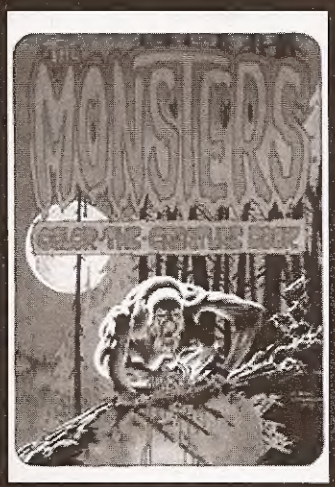

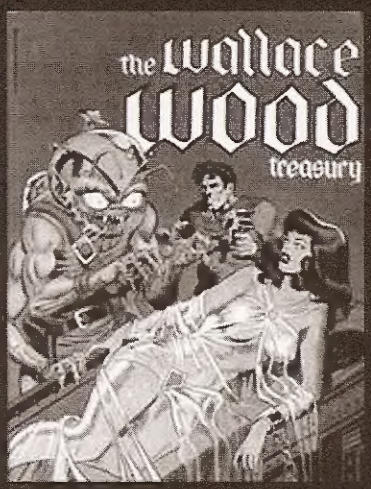

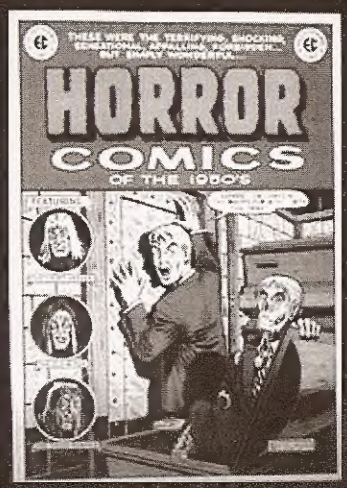

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TALES FROM THE CRYPT

From Comic Books to Television!

CS Films with AMC presents a special documentary - DVD Edition - 2 disc set

Review by Jim Vanhollebeke, Canovanograms 2004

IN THE BEGINNING..

Producer Chip Selby, having written and created a special program for AMC Television, has accomplished a monumental mission. He has documented a story that until now has been glaringly absent from the general media despite it's historic significance. He has also fulfilled a personal dream of paying ground breaking homage to a group of comic books that enriched his youth and placed him among a select group of fans as loyal as Elvis' legions. His dream was one shared by myself and countless others. A dream that is now, thanks to Selby, fully realized.

At first glance,"Tales From the Crypt: from Comic Books to Television" would appear to be a glowing tribute to that wildly successful HBO TV series some years ago. And to a degree, I guess it is. But more than that, this highly engaging video record is an appreciation of the foresight, talent and pain of William M. Gaines... the man who made it all possible so many generations ago. And to the comic books he produced.

Known to the fans as "EC COMICS", they included many early 50's titles such as "Tales from the Crypt", "Haunt of Fear", "Vault of Horror", "Weird Science" and the fledgling "Mad" magazine! "EC" was a catch word for anything by Mr.Gaines' Entertaining Comics Group.

And entertaining they were.

This documentary is, therefore, a tribute to those comics.

Again it's more than that. Perhaps the main feature here, in addition to all the history, is the tremendous appreciation it affords to the people ...artists , writers, publishers, producers ....and most of all FANS. The devoted readers who literally forced what would have been a "dead horse" into a never-ending cultural resurrection. A 50 year HAPPENING... as it were. Yes. That is what this show is about. Tales from the Crypt... the whole story.

In all its color (and rotting) glory... heh heh heh.

Highly acclaimed comic illustrator Berni Wrightson probably says it best right at the beginning calling EC comics, "...the stuff I knew I shouldn't be looking at but couldn't give it up!"

EC Comics was actually the first wave of (and the inspiration for) what we now call "underground comics". Fiercely independent, artistic and full of youthful rebellion. EC was at times innovational, educational, socially aware ...and irresponsible. But these comics were entertaining and in fact addictive to those who read them. Because ECs often included sex, violence and other 'no-no' subjects, they were also hidden from adults (and younger siblings). So bad ...and yet so good! A paradox. Absolutely. But legends are built on such cross-forces.

I watched Mr. Selby's story in it's new DVD form (which expands the original one hour into *four* with additional material). Early on in the show, I was subjected to a literal flood of nostalgicly horrific art from those old comic books filling the screen in waves of graphic terror-ific genius. Almost 3-D, the original EC artwork is displayed in a modified "multi-plane" animation technique simulating cinematic camera pans in a virtual reality of comic book fantasy. Layers of depth from original layouts glide among each other in a pleasing feel of motion and dimensional illusion. Actor voice-overs recreate the scenes being conveyed and ... Good Lord! Perfection in 50's styled enhancement. Adding to all this, the mood setting music interspersed throughout the exposition...geez, it's a bit spooky... like the first time I watched Psycho! The visual effects are both stunning and, to my knowledge, unprecedented.

Then there's the story ... neatly divided into twelve chapters, it proceeds in a fascinating and easy to follow manner. As the narration begins, we are led with the accompaniment of personal family photos, through EC publisher Bill Gaines' youth. We see the somewhat uncomfortable relationship with his father, Max C. Gaines who founded the original EC Comics in the early forties. In those days they were known as Educational Comics

INVASION OF THE WITCHES

Gaines' father had very strict moral definitions for his books. His tragic death in the late 40's forced the totally inexperienced son Bill to take over the business. With a combination of youth, free spirit, some budding artists and writers, the then failing EC comic titles began disappearing as new ones appeared. Educational Comics changed into Entertaining Comics. As Bill later admitted, every single one of his father's strict rules governing comics was broken. The prime "evil influence" for this illegitimate transformation was Al Feldstein, a very young and ambitious artist with a ton of talent & new ideas. Bill and Al became a team and eventually forged a revolution in American comics. A brash insurgency whose impact no one could predict. When Bill & Al's first horror title "Crypt of Terror" (1950) appeared, a minor dissatisfaction soon caused it's title to be changed to "Tales from the Crypt" and a star was born. EC's short ride to brief fame, fortune & glory had begun. But the ride was self destructive, especially in those conservative(if not repressive) 50's. Yet for such "a short ride"...all things considered ~ maybe not so short. Before the crash, EC had become the leading trend setter. The comic market was deluged with countless EC imitations. Competition and one-ups-man-ship within this flood of horror led to an escalation of the questionable violence and taste. EC and the copycats went for broke in a bloody gore-fest competition of ghouls, monsters and severed body parts. They were shocking. They were sensational and they went too far. Worst of all, they caused a new threat to America. Juvenile delinquency. That was the charge.

A GATHERING OF TORCHES

One self appointed expert Dr. Fred Werthem (a medical doctor) wrote a book, Seduction of the Innocent, which condemned comic books as the potential destruction of the moral fiber of American youth. It received big press and ultimately influenced the formation of a United States Senate Sub-Committee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency (may, 1954). It was modeled after the famous McCarthy witch hunts and targeted EC and others. Thus developed the untimely demise of these notorious but beloved EC comics. One of the examples of EC's excesses cited at the Senate hearings was an EC horror story, "Foul Play", illustrated by Jack Davis, in which a person is hacked into chunks and pieces which are horribly utilized in an incredibly macabre baseball game!

When EC was bad it was real bad. But many of the stories had good sense and morality lessons. And there was somewhat of a political tone and conscience within. Something that hinted at social protest. Many stories (later called "preachies") criticized such cultural ills as war and racism. Stories that actually made the reader think... perhaps an awakening and birth of the "protest movement" of the 1960's!

And humor! EC was loaded with it. Feldstein had invented three story telling witches for the horror books. Labeled "Ghoulunatics", they consisted of The Cryptkeeper, The Vault Keeper and The Old Witch. All 3 were wise guy punsters who made readers not only laugh out loud but realize that this outrageous "horror" stuff was just for fun and entertainment.

Ultimately Bill Gaines was condemned and publicly humiliated. EC Comics suffered an untimely but swift death, crucified and burned at the stake. The witches were dead and future witches were forbidden by a new Comics Code among surviving publishers.That was it. Everyone accepted it. But the fans, "EC fan-atics" as they referred to themselves ...would not forget. And they grew up. And when they entered the corporate world, something strange happened (cue the wolf howl....)

WITCHES' REVENGE

EC comics began to emerge from the grave!

The resurrection began slowly and subliminally.

EC's imaginative influence had begun to take hold of television during the late 1950's and early 60's with shows like, "Shock Theater", "Twilight Zone", "Outer Limits", "Alfred Hitchcock Presents", et al. Then the movies. By the 70's the EC aura became more obvious when Britain's Amicus Films got with Gaines to make a feature length movie, "Tales from the Crypt", a horror anthology with five old EC stories recreated by actors. Then in the early 80's Stephen King and George Romero did a great deference to EC Comics with their wildly popular Hollywood film, "Creep Show".

More significant then all this, the comic books themselves returned with a vengeance. Russ Cochran and many other publishers began reprinting all of the EC comics in several different formats during the 1970's, 80's and 90's. They sold like hot cakes. New generations of EC fan-atics emerged (and they were fruitful and did multiply again). The irrepressible Ghoulunatics were back from the grave, jivin' with the kiddies again!The ruthless Dr. Fredric Wertham died and did NOT emerge from the grave! EC comics were back ...but the best was yet to come.

VINDICATION!

EC had returned but as before, superstardom still evaded its reach.

The Crypt Keeper had not yet taken over the planet.It all changed when EC's reincarnation climaxed with Home Box Office Television's smash hit series, "Tales from the Crypt" by producer Joel Silver with the cooperation of Bill Gaines. Because of this hilarious series, Gaines' "*Tales*" became an accepted and fully recognized American icon. The Cryptkeeper became as big a "star" as Mickey Mouse. He was touted by the new Tales from the Crypt Productions as "the worlds undisputed icon of ghoul-horror and spook-tacular fun!" And William M. Gaines was vindicated at last.

With Gaines' input, the tv show was quite successful in recreating the true spirit and irreverence of the original comics whose stories it retold faithfully each week. This despite the fact that the revived Crypt Keeper had disintegrated into a rotting corpse/zombie (played by a puppet animatron!) Yet he was as funny as ever... punning-patter intact. The show's added profanity and nudity was not such a good idea (but I guess the original comics had faults too!). Eventually the series went into syndication where it successfully remains to this day.

Chip Selby takes us through all of this and much more with his thorough and charming documentary. His writing and direction reveal a good natured humor and a loving respect for the subject.

EVERYBODY'S TALKIN'

Any documentary worth it's salt will have pertinent guest commentaries and this one has a near endless line up: The well researched narration is liberally laced with commentaries starting with EC's own Al Feldstein and followed by fans who have gone on to become torch bearers for the legacy. These include fantasy & horror authors such as Stephen King (Carrie) and R.L. Stine (Goosebumps). Contributions by movie producers John Carpenter and George Romero (Creepshow) add to the mix while noted comic book historians and authors, Digby Diel, Grant Geissman, and Mark Evanier and EC reprint-superstar/publisher Russ Cochran lend their thoughts and valuable perspectives.

Did I mention bonus material? Hoh Boy! That's how this became a 2 disc, 4 hour deluxe set! Disc #2 is the interviews disc. This is where we separate fan-addicts from the humans. My guess is that anyone who views Disc 1 will be a fan-addict by the end of the program, whether or not he was before ...so the concept is moot. No separation required! Yes. Interviews ...candid and captivating. Human interest stuff with questions that we'd all love to ask. Artists Jack Davis, Al Williamson, Jack Kamen and (colorist) Marie Severin talking at length about their years at the EC factory. Did you know that a guilt ridden Jack Davis *burned* his ECs after the 'witch hunts'?? Or that a young and inexperienced Al Williamson needed help doing his art assignments for EC?? Fascinating stuff!

The interview with publisher Russ Cochran is particularly interesting for several reasons. He was a fan first, who later became a good friend to William M. Gaines. More significantly, it was Cochran who was the main impetus in the EC revival and who did the most to resurrect the comic books. He is far and above EC's greatest champion. Also interviewed are horror movie director George Romero, Robert Overstreet (author Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide) and EC historian Roger Hill. Sorely missing from this interview disc is Al Feldstein the true genius behind the whole story (busy saving it all for his own book, no doubt). Bless you, Al! Also included in various settings, are stories about deceased EC artists such as "Ghastly" Graham Ingels, Johnny Craig, and Harvey Kurtzman. I wish there could have been mention of others. Perhaps Wally Wood, George Evans, or the irascible Will Elder. But a program of this nature must appeal to the main public with calibrated brevity (rather than cater to us who want everything and anything to do with the story of EC).
So once again, a tip of the hat to producer Selby for his control and focus.

Another of the bonuses on this two disc package is a 2003 meeting between legendary Science fiction writer Ray Bradbury and Mr. Feldstein. The old friends reminisce at length about their collaboration for the interpretations of the many Bradbury stories EC Comics did in their books. The discussion is moderated by EC super fan and comic book historian, Jerry Weist. Al is obviously a big devotee of Mr. Bradbury and they enjoy a great reunion. Good vibrations. Good stuff!

The entire production is honest and respectful. Criticisms are offered though not with malcontent. Feldstein for example, who has not been treated well at all by the Gaines faction, is very gracious in his remarks and sincere in his evaluation of the positive aspects of his and Gaines' relationship.

MADE TO ORDER

Chip Selby who was commissioned by AMC to make this film had expected it would be aired by that network. It was instead aired as a one hour special on AMC's newer subsidiary, "the Monster Network" during the 2004 Halloween season. One would hope AMC, itself will offer it for the additional (and well deserved) exposure.

The new and improved DVD version has 3 (count 'em, boys n' ghouls...three!) additional hours of bonus material and... is all dressed up in a collectible style package that will make any EC collector drool with ghoulish anticipation. The snap-open CD box is made to look like an old issue of Tales from the Crypt while each of the 2 special discs is colorfully decorated with original EC cover art. Clipped inside the box is yet another bonus, a"Vault of Horror" mini-poster that folds out to display extensive liner notes, more photos and a Scene Selection Chapter-list!

As an EC fan-atic, I am fanatically (and frenetically) fascinated by this treasury. After viewing it three times, STILL trying to absorb it all! The film is pure "eye candy" and done with a human angle that will appeal to most everyone, regardless of taste or sentimentality. So I give it three cheers and three thumbs up ...well, two thumbs. Three stars. No. Five stars! At any rate, without doubt a historic document ... a story that waited a long time to be told. And an important work of art befitting the work of art that was EC.
Don't you wait. See it. Soon!

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JIM'S WEIRD FOTOS - PHOTO GALLERIES. Madcap satire, Horror, Artwork etc. http://photodb.santeeweb.com/index.php?VIEW=187&USER=194

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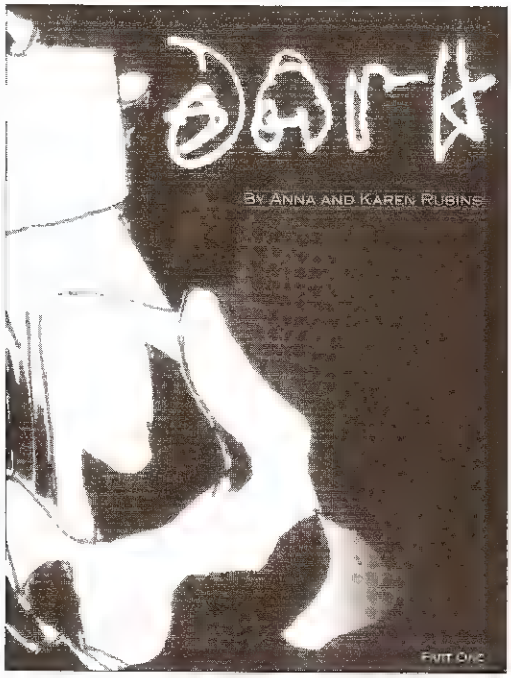
Spaceship Away Part 5 Spring 2005 £6.99 (UK) £9.00 (Overseas)
Rod Barzilay, 8 Marley Close, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 6DH

There just aren't enough superlatives in the English language to do this publication justice. Rod and his dedicated band continue to craft a magazine devoted to preserving the memory of one of the comic book's legends of the twentieth century, Dan Dare, and at the same time bring it to a new generation of readers.

For the last three issues **Spaceship Away** has grown to thirty-six pages, and still it isn't enough, not by any stretch of the imagination. It doesn't take long, just the turning of the page and you are lost in the pulsating spectacle of these vibrant pages and while there is plenty of reading to be had, the energy within brings you to the end all too quickly. Like it or not, you are going to need another fix at the earliest possible date!

The production is of such an extraordinary quality. This isn't any ordinary small press magazine, it is thirty-six pages of full colour printed on a very high quality gloss paper. Rod has gone to amazing lengths to ensure the quality in this magazine is of a standard at least the equal of that which has gone before. It is not very often that you see anything of his stature. The commitment to this project continues to defy belief, going beyond the idea of a fanzine, this is a work of art to be heralded alongside the original. Strong words I know, but Spaceship Away is doing everything within its power to carry on this legend and is doing it in such an accomplished fashion.

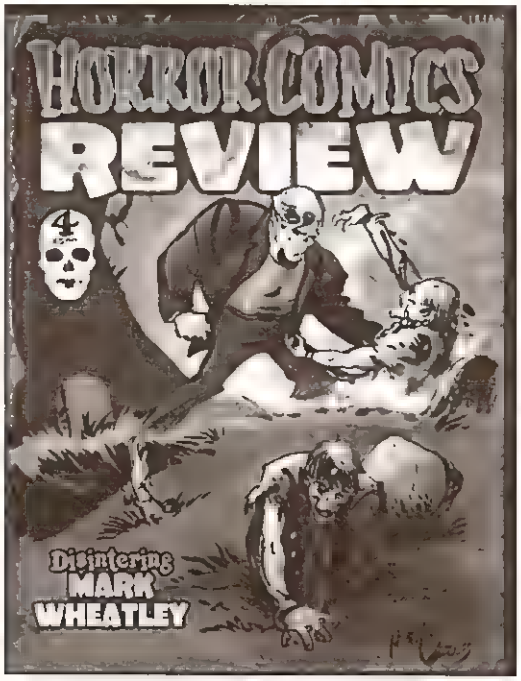
In this issue you actually get an idea of what it is like to put one of these strips together. It's eye opening and absolutely essential for anyone thinking of becoming a comic book creator. If you are a fan of Dan Dare this magazine is a must and if you want to see comics at their finest, then climb aboard.



Dark Part One 2003 £3.00
Anna and Karen Rubins
www.darkplace.co.uk

This is the first part of a four issue series that has only recently reached its finale. **Dark** is an eerie tale of a man who can only awaken at night, with the daylight offering his only chance of sleep. His curse provides the premise for this first issue, but there is far more at work here than meets the eye. Anna unfurls this thought-provoking tale in a manner that belies her years. There is craft at work here, one that will blossom to become something far greater. Throughout these pages there is evidence of a burgeoning talent, someone at ease with pacing a story, cleverly drawing you in and with an ability to create plausible characters in a world that seems one step away from the edge.

Karen supplies the artwork. At first sight it appears raw, suggesting a style, more associated with the storyboards of film production. It works though, adding to the narrative, luring you into this urban world where darkness is the time where life begins. The scenes on the Greek island reveal her dexterity, here she can escape the need to



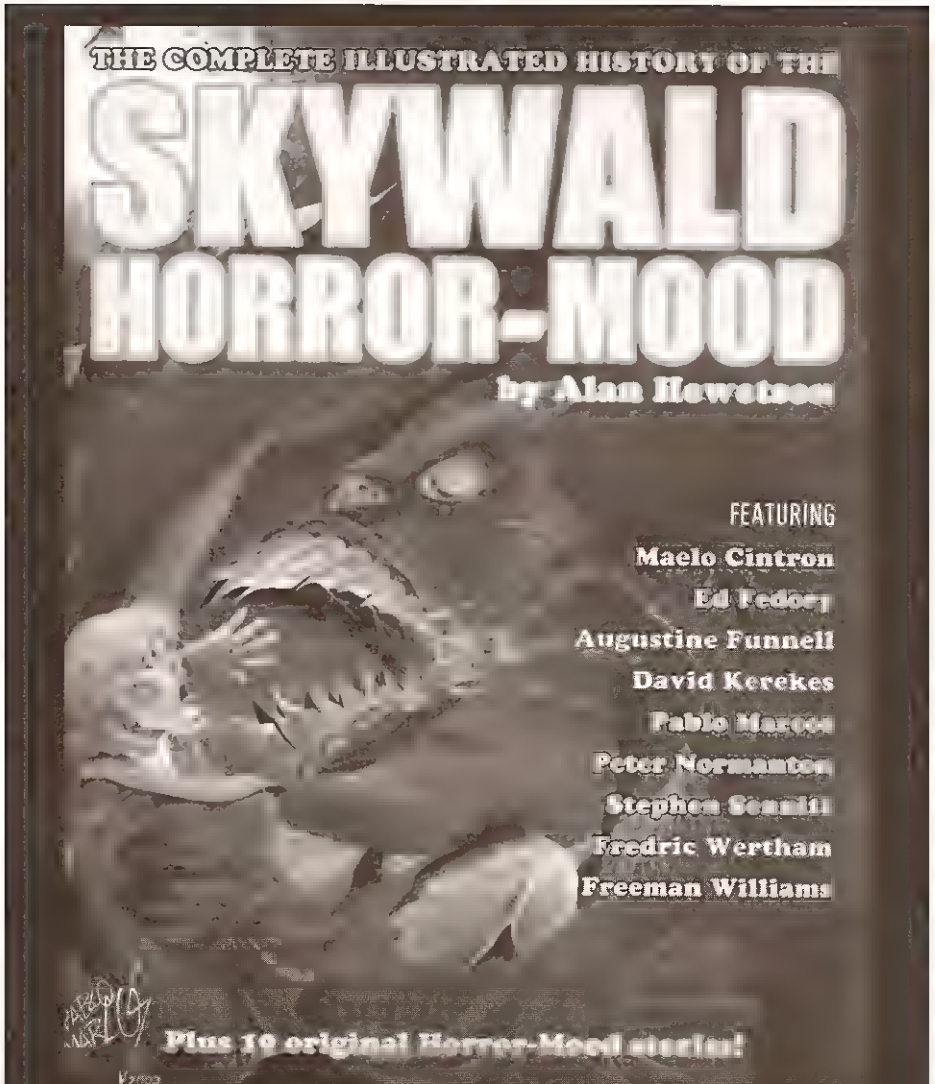
merely tell the story and experiment with technique. It is an eye-catching sequence and will insist you to retrace these pages once you have read this issue just to savour her approach. This is but one of the many reasons I continue to enjoy the small press so much, there is the space to experiment and play with ideas which the mainstream doesn't permit. With creators akin to Anna and Karen this particular field of comic books will never become stagnant. **Dark** isn't the blood curdling horror usually found in the pages, but is the beginning of a very strange journey, which will not resort to convention to settle its mark.

Horror Comics Review 4 Summer 2004
$5.00
Keith Huening, 5883 Kyles Station Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45011 United States

Mark Wheatley supplies an atmospheric cover to get things under way for this issue of Keith's horror magazine. **Horror Comics Review** is growing in confidence with each passing issue. Much in the same way as I continue to do with **From the Tomb**, Keith is learning with every issue and the result is a publication which has plenty to offer those horror fiends lurking out there in the shadows.

The interview with Mark is worth the price of admission on its own. There is so much about this chap's career I didn't know, for anyone interested in any form of creativity this is worth taking a look at. A lot can be learned from his previous track record. Harvey fans will relish seeing part two of Keith's index to **Witches Tales**. Don't for one minute kid yourself and think you know everything about this series, I uncovered more than a few tasty morsels from his piece.

Horror Comics Review probably offers more about bronze-age horror comics than any other publication of its kind. This is where Keith excels, after all it is his era. It's funny but at one time I did take some of these comics for granted, but reading this I have seen the error of my ways. The market report shows the good the bad and the ugly, of some of the latest comic book sales. Some of those bronze-age books appear to be attracting the speculators. Let's face it, it was going to happen. Check out Stanley Houston's painting on the back cover; this is a man with a very bright future! $5.00 for a forty-four page issue remains extremely good value for your money. Hopefully when you have read this, issue **#5** will be on the way.



The Complete Illustrated History of the Skywald Horrormood by Alan Hewetson £14.99 $24.95 Headpress, PO Box 26, Manchester, M26 1PQ, England

Fans of the Skywald Horrormood have long had to wait for a tome of such magnitude to cast light into the shadow land of this fabled publisher. For more than thirty years devotees of their hideous portfolio have mused upon the profanities once unleashed in these forbidden vaults, trying in vain to gauge the nature of the depravity that spawned such unsettling counsel. Now comes the time, for none other than Alan Hewetson, the man who created the Horrormood, bids you welcome to his lunatic domain.

For the time served Skywald aficionado over two hundred and fifty pages of twisted enlightenment have been offered for your perusal, their appeal however will ultimately transcend this devoted assemblage. EC, Marvel, Web of Horror, and of course Warren are each woven into the insane vision that coalesced to become the Horrormood. Dr Fredric Wertham was also asked to share his thoughts with the Archaic one in a revealing discussion from the early 1970s, which is destined to continue the censorship debate and ask more questions of the motive behind the Comics Code.

If you are cursed by a compulsion to experience the dementia from the Horrormood, there are nineteen macabre tales offered for your putrid delectation, foul manifestations first seen over three decades ago. I can think of no better way to become acquainted with this one publisher who dared to explore the very essence of horror. Interviews with Pablo Marcos, Maelo Cintron, Augustine Funnell and Ed Fedory are also brought to you in these pages, alongside comments from many other luminaries in the industry. Let's not forget Richard J Arndt and his crew, who should be complimented on their exhaustive Skywald index. And finally a resounding pat on the back must be given to publisher David Kerekes for first of all getting Alan to write this book and then face the task of having to complete it in the months following Alan's unexpected death. This book is an essential read and should occupy a space on your bookcase!

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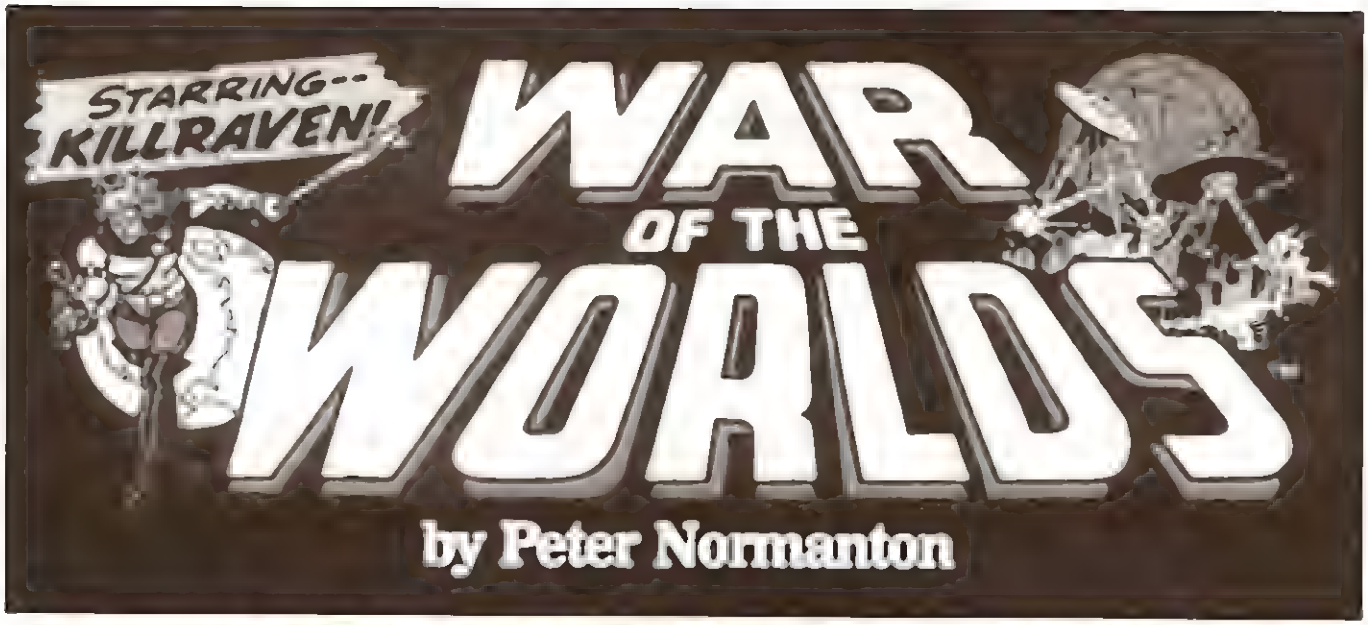
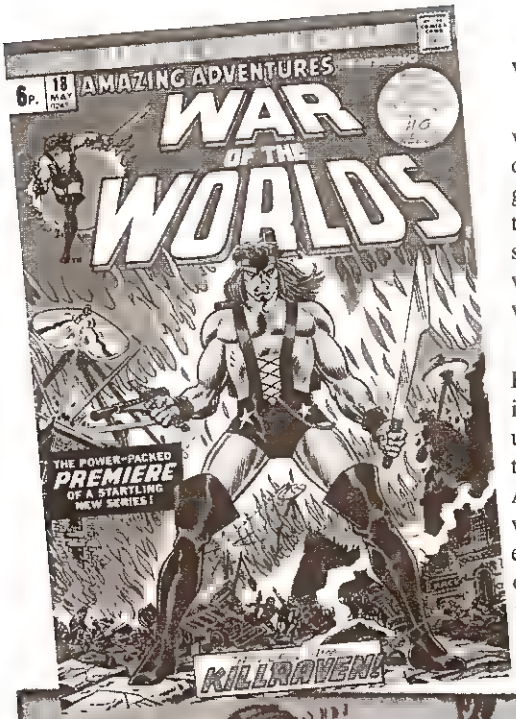


As the bombs and rays of seething death ravaged the icon Arthur C. Clarke had embellished with such visionary passion, only the deranged could have observed the poetry permeating the malfeasance that followed. This was the year 2001; a far cry from the one still lingering in your memory. In this reality the Martian death machines had made their landing one hundred years before to lay siege to our world. Their dreams of conquest were oh so nearly realised. Man however, blinded by his inherent lack of wisdom chose to forget this interval of unimaginable terror. Having faced this unrelenting oppressor maybe he didn't want to remember. Surely there was no need, for if there were a God in heaven such evil could never again be permitted to traverse the void between our planets. Clinging to his belief, man purposely omitted these days of meaningless destruction from the pages of his history. It had been too much for his frailty to comprehend; alas the endless warring across his own lands and the killing of his own kind was to continue. The intervening century witnessed his recurring displays of depravity becoming more intense, and in his frenzied ferocity he failed to look to where the real threat lay in wait, the Red Planet, Mars.

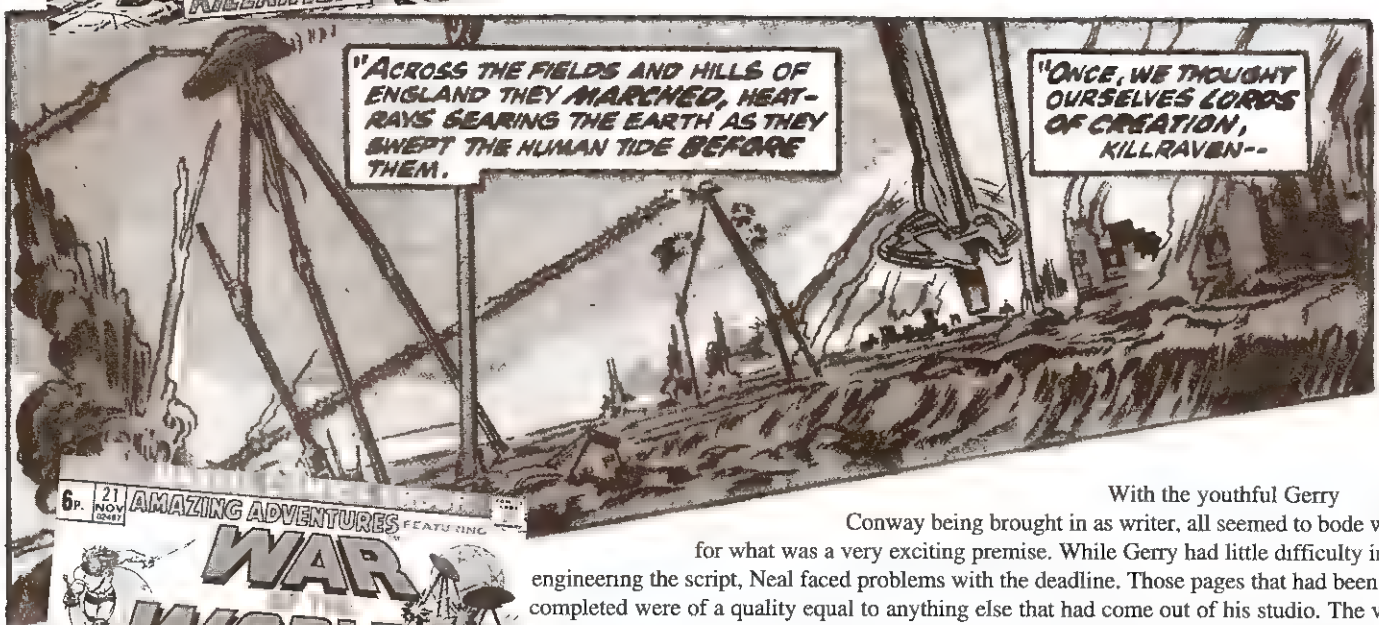
With nothing to stop them these foul beings once more soared across our solar system, this time exploding into the pages of **Amazing Adventures 18.** The world of man was now forced to pay the price in full for their foolhardy ways. The Martian death dealers had planned

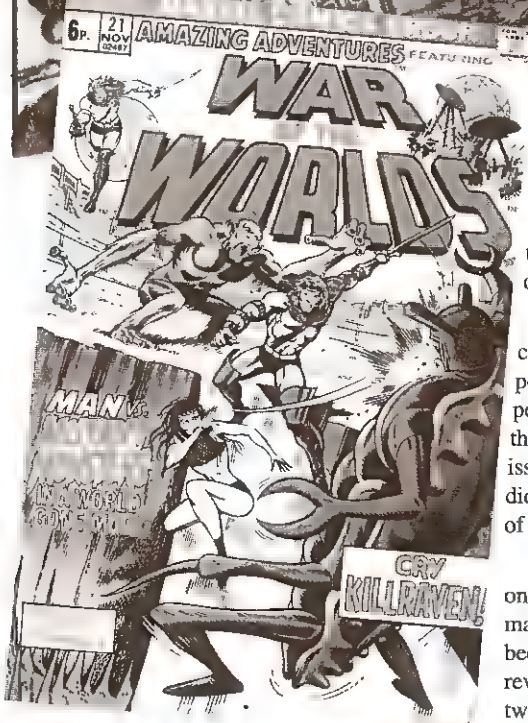


well, this time there would be no room for error.

Once described as a dying race, this alien breed had sought to manufacture immunity to the virus that had frustrated their earlier invasion attempt. The philosophy surrounding the free man of the 1970s was no more. Those who escaped the death rays, survived only as slaves, breeders, gladiators, a culinary delicacy, or as victims of lunatic experimentation laid before the scientists the Martians had been so careful to protect, then there was another sinister element, those who sought to collaborate with their new masters. This ruined landscape was not the brave new world that had once been alluded to in flights of fantasy; in its place was a dystopian nightmare where hope had become a pitiful dream.

The inspiration for this twenty-first century **War of the Worlds** came not surprisingly from Roy Thomas. It was H G Wells' chapter "*The Man on Putney Hill*" which laid the seed for his imaginings. In the original text a lone artillery man had eulogised on how abysmal life would be under the Martians in the wake of the 1901 landings. These despairing thoughts were to provide the basis for the events that eventually unfolded in the pages of **Amazing Adventures**. Neal Adams was Roy's first choice as artist. You can but admire his sense of discernment. Neal wasn't only one of the finest artists of the day, his creative zeal had worked to extraordinary effect to enhance so many projects he had been involved with; its easy to see why Roy had enlisted his support. As would be expected Neal came with an idea or two of his own, some of which made it into the series. It should be remembered this was 1973, Marvel still had every right to champion itself as the House of Ideas.


"ACROSS THE FIELDS AND HILLS OF ENGLAND THEY MARCHED, HEAT-RAYS SEARING THE EARTH AS THEY SWEPT THE HUMAN TIDE BEFORE THEM.
"ONCE, WE THOUGHT OURSELVES LORDS OF CREATION, KILLRAVEN--



Across the middle of these two pages Neal Adams' depiction of the Martian invasion from Amazing Adventures 18. Also, the covers to AM 18, 21, 27 & 25.

With the youthful Gerry Conway being brought in as writer, all seemed to bode well for what was a very exciting premise. While Gerry had little difficulty in engineering the script, Neal faced problems with the deadline. Those pages that had been completed were of a quality equal to anything else that had come out of his studio. The very essence of the man had a need to tell stories and this need insisted he make them as visually exciting as anyone could. He succeeded, for more than thirty years later the work he produced on **War of the Worlds** remains a joy to behold. It would have taken painstaking hours to put together, but there was so much in the way of meticulous detail to savour, with a flow observed between the panels that few comic book artists have since been able to match.

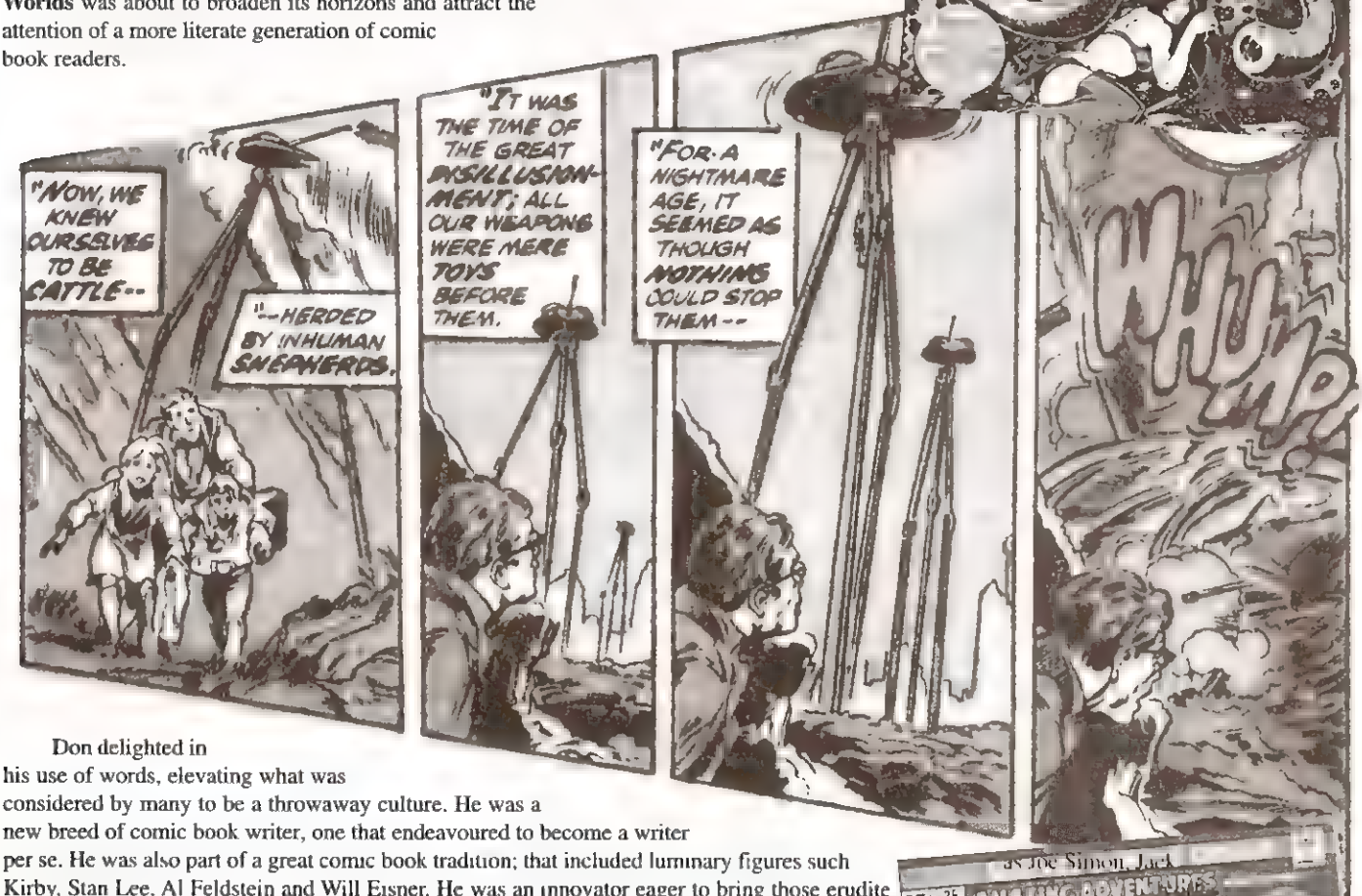
Howard Chaykin was assigned with the task of trying to get this book out on time. As he crafted at his drawing board it became more and more of a struggle to measure up to the polished work already waiting to go to print, although I think we should put things into perspective. These were early days for the aspiring Chaykin and it would be unwise to confuse this work with the **American Flagg** of a few years hence. Unknown to those who plucked this issue from the shelves, he had only a matter of days to bring Gerry Conway's script to life. He did everything he could to achieve this and succeeded in attaining an element, albeit rudimentary, of Neal's style. This was an artist who could look to the future.

When **War of the Worlds** returned to continue in its destructive path, Howard's pencils were once again in evidence. Here there was the occasional suggestion of the talent that would one day make him a best seller, but that was for another day. When issue **#20** hit the news-stands he had been replaced by a trusted member of the Marvel bullpen, one Herb Trimpe. Herb seemed to revel in this shattered America of 2018, rendering landmarks so familiar to the readers, now twisted into a mocking guise, moulded by the machinations of the Martian aggressors. If Herb had seen this series to the end, it would have been hailed as an exciting title so typical of the Marvel Comics of the time, very much in the style of Jack Kirby. For the vast majority of comic readers this would have worked perfectly.

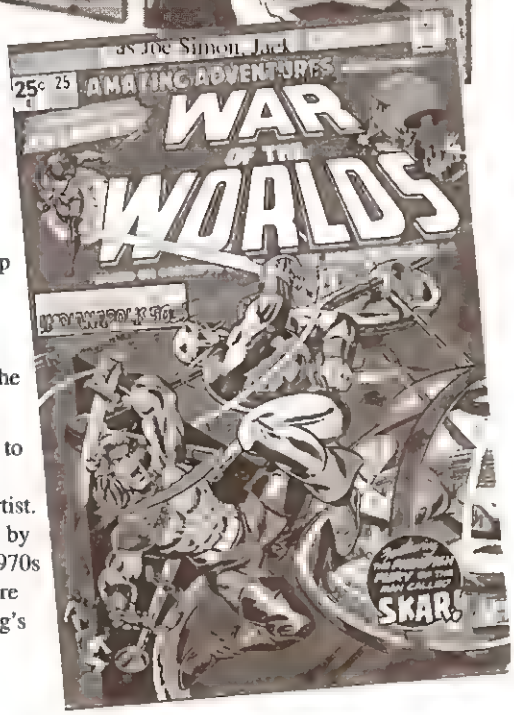
However when Don McGregor was handed the mantle as writer, War of the Worlds began to steer a very unusual path. It remained as exciting as ever, that can't be denied, elements of Jack

Kirby's dynamism were still in evidence as was the fantasy like appeal of **Conan the Barbarian**. It was the narrative itself that was seen to defy convention. Few could have realised it, but Don was one of several creators who were taking comic books in a direction many other aspiring creators would regard with growing interest and draw upon in the years to come, but were the regular readers actually ready for it? These early issues didn't stray too far from the formula based stories Marvel had built their reputation on. Each tale distorted the texture of this disfigured alien terrain just that little more. Don continued in this vein but he gave this tortured Earth a poetic majesty never before seen in comics. It seemed so much at odds with the carnage inflicted by our Martian masters, but with Don's ever growing confidence it began to prosper.

From the comfort of his desk in 1975 Don McGregor envisaged the 1990s to be an age of immense technological advancement. Man had returned to the stars, accelerating the capacity of his communication systems while overcoming the energy crisis and the bugbear of inner city congestion. Issue **#32's** "*Only My Computer Shows me Any Respect!*" may have a disarming ring to more than a few of you, even as far back as the 1990s. These technological observations however were merely peripheral to the progress of this tale, and in truth the complexity of the hardware employed by the Martians far surpassed our own feeble dallying. It wasn't the technology that was to make this short-lived title one to remember, **War of the Worlds** was about to broaden its horizons and attract the attention of a more literate generation of comic book readers.


"NOW, WE KNEW OURSELVES TO BE CATTLE--
"--HERDED BY INHUMAN SHEPHERDS.
"IT WAS THE TIME OF THE GREAT DISILLUSIONMENT; ALL OUR WEAPONS WERE MERE TOYS BEFORE THEM.
"FOR A NIGHTMARE AGE, IT SEEMED AS THOUGH NOTHING COULD STOP THEM--
WHUMP

Don delighted in his use of words, elevating what was considered by many to be a throwaway culture. He was a new breed of comic book writer, one that endeavoured to become a writer per se. He was also part of a great comic book tradition; that included luminary figures such Kirby, Stan Lee, Al Feldstein and Will Eisner. He was an innovator eager to bring those erudite he had so much enjoyed into the panels that opened a window to his stories. It wasn't going to be easy, **Killraven** was a series already being scrutinised in the wake of its continually poor sales. Paradoxically this fact may well have worked to his advantage, allowing him the chance to experiment and challenge that, which was considered acceptable, just many worthy creators had done before him.



As the letters page and fan press of the time revealed, the more literate amongst the readership were indeed savouring each and every panel. The stylised story telling observed in these issues aroused their interest, but the ever-falling sales couldn't be ignored. This became worse when **War of the Worlds** was dropped as the title to this series with issue **#29** and replaced at the mast by **Killraven**. When this marked downturn was discovered, issue **#35** saw the return of the War of the Worlds logo, but time was becoming ever precious.

We can only wonder if this small but enthusiastic readership would have been as receptive to Don's scholarly design, if P Craig Russell hadn't joined the team. Craig came on board with **Amazing Adventures 27**, following an appearance by Rich Buckler and then Gene Colan as artist. "*The Death Breeders*" inked by Jack Abel took Killraven's band of Freemen to Lake Michigan, by now it was the March of 2019. The splash page was so evocative of a theme used during the 1970s and on into the next decade, that of a future world terrorised into utter madness. Jack's inks were of the titanic mould demanded by Marvel's dedicated followers, but he didn't overshadow Craig's expressive style, which was already beginning to entice with its unique blend of magic.

When Earth fought its war against the Martians and won, little did mankind dream that the invaders would someday return to destroy civilization! Only a handful of men dared to stand between a world and its would be conquerors and there was only one man who could lead them...
Stan Lee PRESENTS: KILLRAVEN WARRIOR OF THE WORLDS!™
NIX OLYMPIA VOLCANO, MARS--DECEMBER, 2019!
HE HAD TOUCHED THE BLADE OF GRASS --
--AND IT TURNED TO RED MARTIAN DUST BENEATH HIS HANDS!
RED DUST LEGACY
THE SAND SIFTS THROUGH HIS FINGERS NOW, AND KILLRAVEN KNOWS FOR A CERTAINTY THAT THE DESERT HE KNEELS UPON IS LOCATED ON THE PLANET MARS!
HE IS ALONE WITH THAT TRUTH --
--AND THE TRUTH IS STAGGERING!
BUT NOT AS STAGGERING AS THE EVENTS YET TO OCCUR!
DON McGREGOR WRITER
CRAIG RUSSELL
SONNY TRINIDAD
PHIL RACHE
DAVE HUNT
MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR

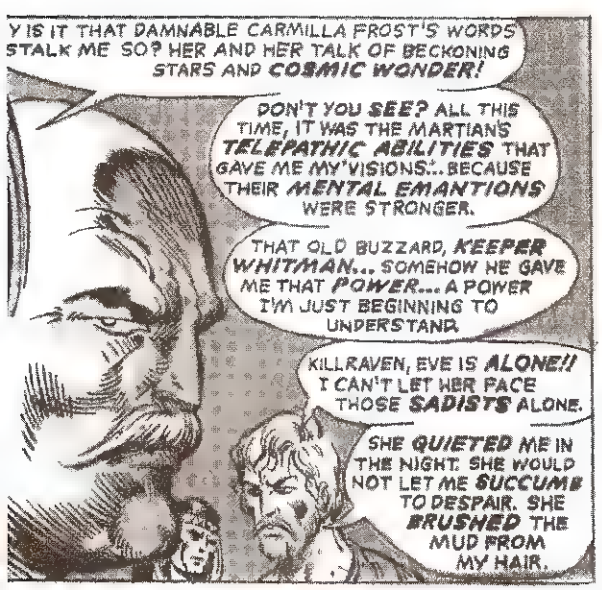
The opening page to the following issue's "*The Death Merchant!*" provided further evidence of his talent. Here he was on his own, supplying the pencils, inks and colours. It was a remarkable piece of work; Craig seemed to have an inexplicable chemistry with Don's prose, which encouraged a shaping of the narrative into something more than we had been previously party to. There was adventure and excitement for sure, as Volcana revealed her past and Skar that ruthless accomplice of the High Overlord tracked Killraven and his band down. The Sacrificer was of the surgically deranged ilk only a comic book could have given life to and there were mutated monsters aplenty. The writing was afforded an opulence rarely bequeathed to a comic book and the art beguiled to lure you ever deeper into its panels, but this issue was also the kind of fast paced story telling Marvel Comics had become renowned for.

While the drama poured from these pages, the **War of the Worlds** story line did not always occupy the entire contents of **Amazing Adventures**. Tales from those bygone days of Atlas acted as fillers. It was probably a way of making the book an affordable production, paying the writer and the artist for the pages they were commissioned and then supplementing the issue with artwork from the vaults. While I am a great fan of these ageing anecdotes they weren't always the most seemly inclusion for this ultra modern series. Thankfully they were withdrawn with issue **#29**, as the book was re-titled **Killraven** and sales plummeted to another low. "*The Hell Destroyers*" played host to nineteen pages of Don McGregor's eloquent script with Craig Russell finding time to complete both the pencils and inks and Dave Hunt now providing the colours. In only his third showing Craig had made Killraven a title deserving of the House of Ideas. There was a subtlety to his composition often associated with the philosophy of the romantics; little wonder he occasionally draws comparison with Barry Smith and his love of the Pre Raphaelites. While there was a poetry attendant in Don's narrative, Craig's finished work offered a similarly sublime consonance. With such splendour courted in these pages it was impossible for the reader not to care deeply for this group of rebels and the down-trodden slaves of persecuted by these amoral colonists.

Later in issue **#36**, the breathtaking "*Red Dust Legacy*", Don established an uncanny empathy with a fledgling Martian using Killraven's mind link. It was a strange feeling to actually begin to enter the Martian mindset. This again bears testimony to his capacity as a writer. Oh, it had been done many times before at Marvel, but not quite like this. "*Red Dust Legacy*" was this series' finest moment, probably only equalled by the ephemeral finale in **#39** "*Mourning Prey*". If ever an impassioned poetry could be attributed to this disposal culture, it was here. The love and care observed in these two issues is only very rarely seen in comic books.

In truth they had nothing to lose, although you have to wonder if even at this late juncture, editorially Marvel were concerned at the creators' indulgence. As Craig struggled for perfection deadlines began to slip away. There were several filler issues, one of which, allowed Keith Giffen to gift his promise to issue **#38**, six months after his admirable assist on the inking of issue **#35's** moving "*The 24 Hour Man.*" By the time "*Arena Kill*" appeared in **Amazing Adventures #37** both Don and Craig must have come to accept the end was nigh. This issue chose not to use the narrative we had come to enjoy; it was purely dialogue. While it provided depth to Killraven's brooding nature, it was far removed from his work of only a few months before. The delicate finesse that we know to be intrinsic to Craig's pages was butchered by Jack Abel; an inker who I have such tremendous respect for. In his defence he may have received the pages to this tale very late in the day. It does appear rushed and should not invite comparison with the quality of work he produced in issues **#27** and **#35**. It might be construed Don and Craig had rebelled against their editorial seniors in turning out a sub-standard piece of work. I can't see this because they were too aware of how much a devoted group of fans had taken this book to their hearts. It is food for thought, though.

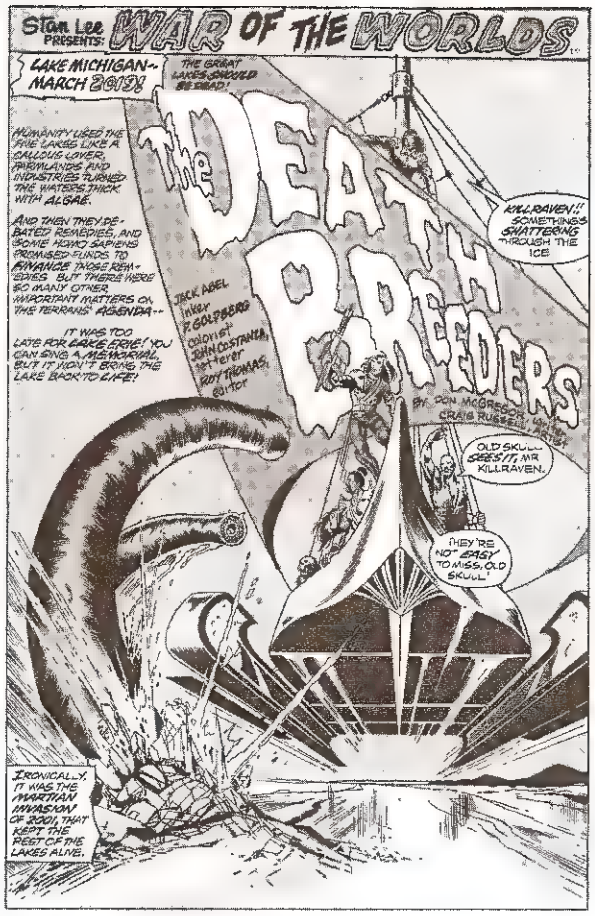
The consummation of this rebellion came with **#39's** "*Mourning Prey*". The love and affection these men had for the scarred world conceived three years before by Roy Thomas and Neal Adams was brought to fruition in this delicate swan song. This was to be a denouement befitting a series dignified by such ethereal beauty. Don embellished his tale with a lyricism, which would have devotees of this series returning to its grandeur for years to come. Craig in turn adorned these pages with one last glimpse of our devastated world, a world which against impossible odds now offered a semblance of hope.

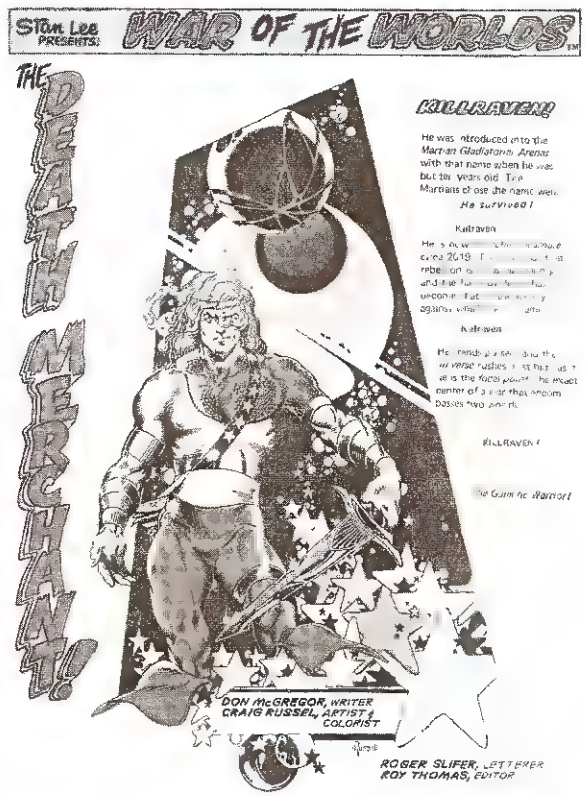

Y IS IT THAT DAMNABLE CARMILLA FROST'S WORDS STALK ME SO? HER AND HER TALK OF BECKONING STARS AND COSMIC WONDER!
DON'T YOU SEE? ALL THIS TIME, IT WAS THE MARTIANS TELEPATHIC ABILITIES THAT GAVE ME MY VISIONS... BECAUSE THEIR MENTAL EMANTIONS WERE STRONGER.
THAT OLD BUZZARD, KEEPER WHITMAN... SOMEHOW HE GAVE ME THAT POWER... A POWER I'M JUST BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND.
KILLRAVEN, EVE IS ALONE!! I CAN'T LET HER FACE THOSE SADISTS ALONE.
SHE QUIETED ME IN THE NIGHT. SHE WOULD NOT LET ME SUCCUMB TO DESPAIR. SHE BRUSHED THE MUD FROM MY HAIR.

Amazing Adventures 39 was not to be the last of Killraven and his surviving band. They would turn up again along side Spiderman in **Marvel Team-Up #45** before Don McGregor and Craig Russell were given the chance to continue the story line in **Marvel Graphic Novel #7**, in 1983. Killraven was now an eighties man, his long red locks now considerably trimmed. However the burning lust to put pay to his former masters had not been extinguished as had the need to find his brother.

Seven years on the series had lost none of its allure. This was the perfect showcase for this saga, one that would appeal to an older readership who could spend time with Don's prose and fully appreciate Craig's singular talent. Sadly it was to be the finale for Don, Craig and Killraven's band of Freemen, but it was a good way to take their curtain call, not long before corporate greed swamped the youth of the western world and the idea of rebellion trodden into the embers of the 70s counterculture.

The series would continue into the 1990s and be released again in the new century. As good as these later entries were, the saga told in **Amazing Adventures** will always be the one fans remember with warmth and affection. It was very much a part of its time, a time which challenged the existing order and gave comic books an alternative direction. The silver screen now beckons for Killraven, maybe it will prove his "*Red Dust Legacy*".


STAN LEE PRESENTS: WAR OF THE WORLDS
LAKE MICHIGAN-- MARCH 2019
THE GREAT LAKES SHOULD BE DEAD!
HUMANITY USED THE FINE LAKES LIKE A CALLOUS LOVER, FARMLANDS AND INDUSTRIES TURNED THE WATERS THICK WITH ALGAE.
AND THEN THEY DE-BATED REMEDIES, AND SOME HOMO SAPIENS PROPOSED FUNDS TO FINANCE THOSE REM-EDIES. BUT THERE WERE SO MANY OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS ON THE TERRANS' AGENDA--
IT WAS TOO LATE FOR LAKE ERIE! YOU CAN SING A MEMORIAL, BUT IT WON'T BRING THE LAKE BACK TO LIFE!
THE DEATH BRINGERS
BY DON McGREGOR CRAIG RUSSELL
JACK ABEL inker P. GOLDBERG colorist JOHN COSTANZA letterer ROY THOMAS, Editor
KILLRAVEN!! SOMETHING'S SHATTERING THROUGH THE ICE
OLD SKULL SEES IT, MR KILLRAVEN.
THEY'RE NOT EASY TO MISS, OLD SKULL.
IRONICALLY, IT WAS THE MARTIAN INVASION OF 2001, THAT KEPT THE REST OF THE LAKES ALIVE.

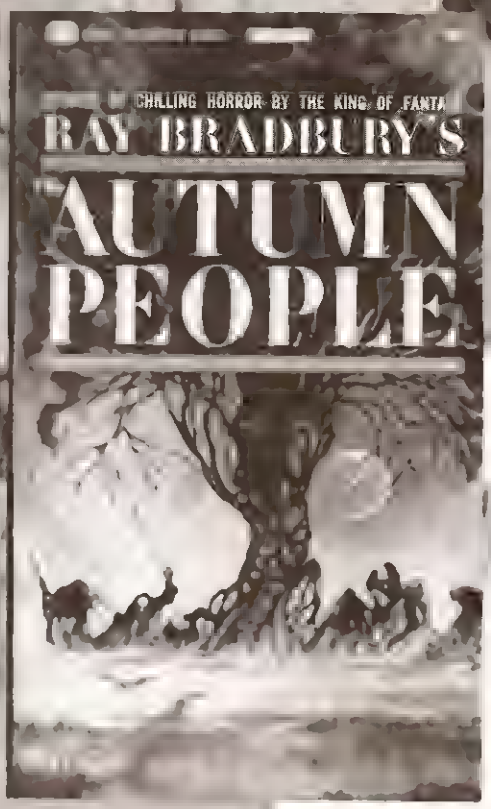

STAN LEE PRESENTS: WAR OF THE WORLDS
THE DEATH MERCHANT!
KILLRAVEN!
He survived!
DON McGREGOR, WRITER CRAIG RUSSELL, ARTIST & COLORIST
ROGER SLIFER, LETTERER ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

Two panels from AM #36's "Red Dust Legacy" can be found on the facing page, plus artwork from issue #28. Above we have the splash pages to issue #27 and #28, which show a difference in Craig's style after only a couple of appearances.

TREASURIES OF TERROR

HORROR COMICS PAPERBACKS

By Tom Atkinson



and Sci-Fi stories in black and white, often rearranged and presented with 2 panels sideways on a page to accommodate the physical constraints of the format. **Tales from the Crypt** appeared in 1964 with a great cover by Frank Frazetta depicting the Crypt Keeper and a classic pair of corpse-like hands clawing up out of their grave. The title must have been a success because more horror reprints followed in 1965 with **The Vault of Horror** and a Sci Fi collection came out the same year – **Tales of the Incredible** Ballantine also put out two collections of the Ray Bradbury stories that EC had adapted in their magazines – **The Autumn People** (1965) was a collection of horror stories and **'Tomorrow Midnight'** (1966) contained Sci Fi shorts. Again, both books benefited from Frazetta covers.

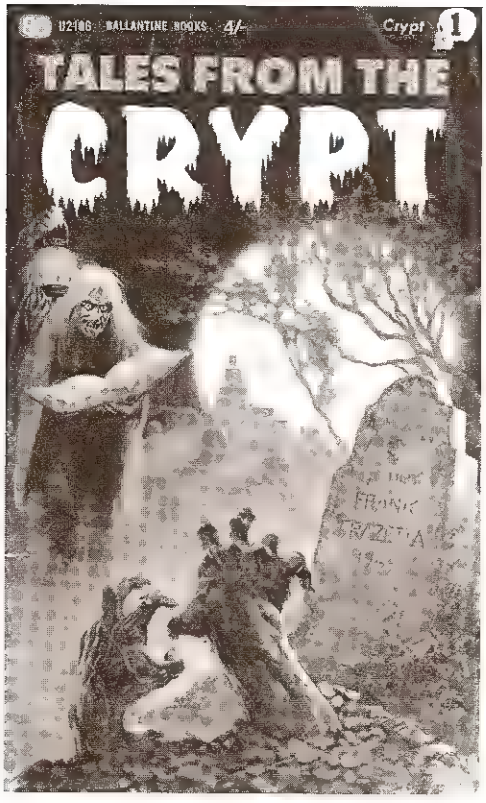
At around the same time the man who had been named editor on the first issues of Warren's **Creepy** black and white comics mag was also making inroads into comics paperback publishing. Russ Jones was involved in the publication of two books in 1966 – **Dracula** from Ballantine books and **Christopher Lee's Treasury of Terror** from paperback stalwarts Pyramid. The former (a 'Russ Jones Production') is a comic book adaptation of Bram Stoker's vampire tale – drawn by Alden McWilliams with an introduction by Christopher Lee. It's a nice enough effort with a great cover and is certainly one of my favourite interpretations of the novel. Lee not only provides an introduction but also lends his name to the second volume. The **Treasury of Terror** is a true classic with comic book versions of various vintage horror stories. EC mainstay artist Johnny Craig illustrates Kipling's *'Mark of the Beast'*, Jones himself draws *'Wentworth's Day'* by HP Lovecraft and August Derleth and *'Dracula'* artist Alden McWilliams inks Robert Bloch's *'The Past Master'*. Frank Bolle provides two stories – a version of Ambrose Bierce's classic American horror *'The Death of Halpin Frayser'* and Stoker's *'Dracula's Guest'*. It is not surprising that the high quality comic book adaptations in the **Treasury of Terror** were snapped up by James Warren and reprinted in his various magazines when original artwork was running low.

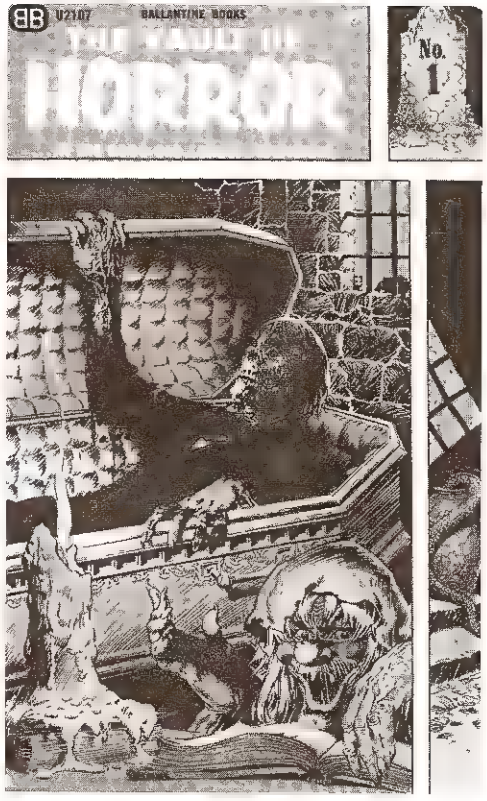
Warren himself had already dabbled in paperbacks with some collections of **Famous Monsters of Filmland** articles – **The Best of Famous Monsters of Filmland** (1964), **Son of Famous Monsters of Filmland** (1965) and **Famous Monsters of Filmland Strikes Back** (1965) were all published by the Paperback Library and are much sought after now. Pierce and Ballantine's **Monster Magazine and Fanzine Collectors Guide #2** (2001) values all three of these titles over $100 in Very Fine or Near Mint condition. **Famous Monsters of Filmland Strikes Back** even had a Russ Jones cover. In 1971 Warren published a collection of horror stories from his black and white magazines – **The Best of Creepy** was from Tempo books and followed the Ballantine lead with a great Frazetta cover of a vampire fighting a werewolf.

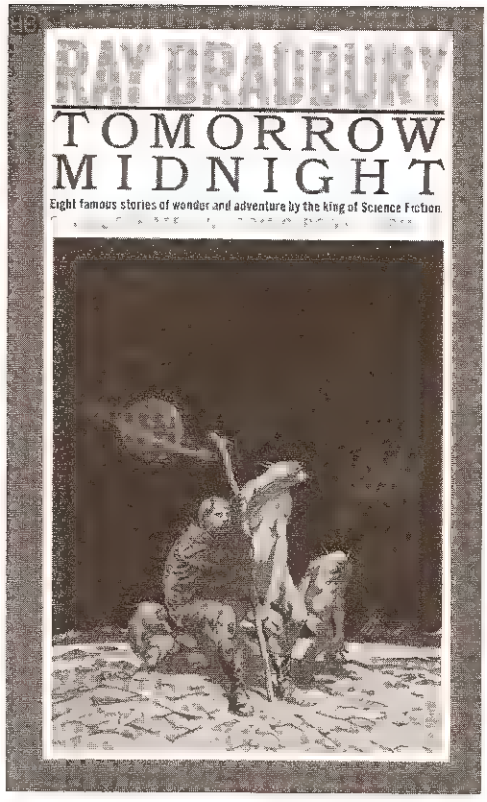
As well as these comic book reprint paperbacks, there is a sub genre of novels written about horror comic characters. From 1975, Warner published 6 novels about Warren's Vampirella. The *'girl from the stars'* appeared in **Bloodstalk**, **On Alien Wings, Dead Walk, Blood Wedding, Death Game** and **Snake God**. The first three in the series also had English editions from Sphere books. These paperbacks were novelisations of Vampi's comic book adventures from her own magazine they were penned by pulp paperback writer extraordinaire Ron Goulart who is probably best known for his detective novels. They are pretty well written and very enjoyable to belt through – you'd be hard pressed taking longer than a couple of hours to read one. Comics fans that fancied a literary experience could also enjoy two short story collections from veteran writer Jack Oleck, who had penned some of the later stories for EC. Based on the DC mystery comic **House of Mystery** volumes 1 and 2 were both published in 1973 by the Warner Paperback Library and as an added treat had great covers and interior illustrations by fan favourite Bernie Wrightson. Oleck also penned the novelisations of the Amicus EC films **Tales from the Crypt** and **The Vault of Horror** for Bantam books.

Another paperback of interest to comics fans is Bruce Jones's **Twisted Tales** – a short story collection published by Blackthorne in 1987. At the time, Jones was best known as a horror comics writer and artist for Warren and Skywald before editing and writing his own line of horror comics for Pacific (and later Eclipse), also called **Twisted Tales**. Jones is enjoying something of a comeback at the moment, doing sterling writing on Marvels' **Hulk** series and one shots like the **Spiderman** and Hulk movie adaptations. The paperback book showcases Jones's short fiction and it must be said that the stories are very much in the comics tradition with EC-like twist endings. The book has a fantastic cannibal cover by underground comix legend and long time Jones collaborator Richard Corben.

Now we move onto yet another sub-genre (brace yourselves) novels based on movies based on horror comic books. I have already mentioned Orleck's paperbacks based on the Amicus EC films. The 1980s saw the publication of three **Swamp Thing** paperbacks, inspired by the iffy movies. In 1982 Tor Books published a comic book paperback **Swamp Thing** that reprinted issues 1 3 of the







classic Bernie Wrightson / Len Wein DC series. The same year and the same publisher also saw the release of a novel by David Houston and Len Wein, based on the Wes Craven movie and also called (confusingly) **Swamp Thing**.

In 1989 Corgi books published the UK edition of **Return of the Swamp Thing** by Peter David, based on the sequel movie starring Heather Locklear. The novel is not actually that bad, (it's certainly better than the film), but it suffers in comparison with the high quality of the **Saga of the Swamp Thing** comics that were being produced by DC in the 1980s. Similarly, the success of New Line Cinema's **Blade** movie, starring Wesley Snipes prompted a novelisation published by Harper Collins. **Blade** by Mel Odom was fairly well received but the success of the movie seemed to catch Marvel Comics by surprise as they missed the opportunity to reprint all those excellent **Tomb of Dracula** Blade stories at the time – a mistake currently being rectified with the two **Essential Tomb of Dracula** collections that have recently hit the shelves down at your local comic shop.

While we're on the subject of Marvel, mention should be made to their premier supernatural character and his paperback appearances. **Dr Strange** appeared in a series of three comic book paperbacks that re-printed his first 33 appearances in **Strange Tales – Stan Lee Presents: Dr Strange Volumes 1 –3** appeared between 1978 and 1979 and were published by Pocket Books. All the Silver Age Marvel superheroes got the same treatment at the time, along with some great reprints of the Barry Windsor Smith **Conan** comics in the **Complete Marvel Conan** that run for (as far as I can make out) 6 volumes. The Sorcerer Supreme was back in a novel in 1979 – number 7 in the Stan Lee Presents novel series **Dr Strange: Nightmare** was penned by William Rotsler and also published by Pocket Books. (Rotsler is an old hand at movie and TV adaptations).

And there it is the horror comics paper back, an animal that has become extinct due to the evolution of the rival species known as Graphic Novels and Trade Paperbacks. There's no doubt that these innovations offer comics fans better value for money, a wider range of material and a higher quality product but for me there's something aesthetically pleasing about the forerunners to them all. Most of these titles are readily available through second hand book dealers and at comics fairs. So go on, comics fans, treat yourselves! At a distance people on the train might even think that you're reading a 'proper' book.

CONTENTS LISTINGS FOR THE COLLECTIONS MENTIONED IN THIS ARTICLE

Tales from the Crypt (Ballantine 1964)
Cover by Frank Frazetta
Let the punishment fit the crime by Jack Davis
Dead right by Jack Davis
The high cost of dying by Reed Crandall
Reflection of death by Al Feldstein
Poetic justice by Graham Ingels
Whirlpool by Johnny Craig
Blind alleys by George Evans
All through the house by Johnny Craig

Vault of Horror (Ballantine 1965)
Cover by Frank Frazetta
Starlight, starbright by Johnny Craig
Last respects by Graham Ingels
The trophy by Jack Davis
Curiosity killed by George Evans
The basket by Jack Davis
Fed Up by Johnny Craig
Wish you were here by Graham Ingels
The craving grave by Joe Orlando

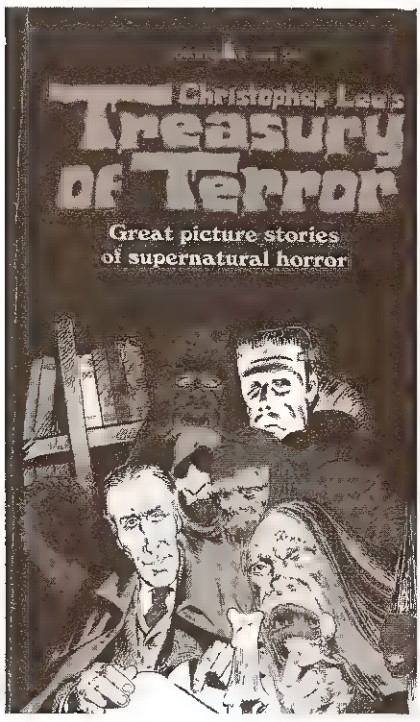
Tales of the Incredible (Ballantine 1965)
Cover by Frank Frazetta
Spawn of Mars by Wally Wood
Plucked by Wally Wood
By George by Al Williamson
50 Girls 50 by Al Williamson
Judgment Day by Joe Orlando
Chewed Out by Joe Orlando
Child of tomorrow by Al Feldstein
The precious years by Wally Wood

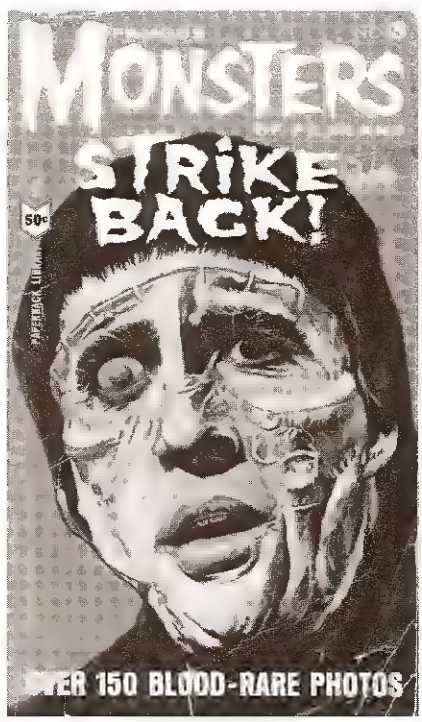
The Autumn People (Ballantine 1965)
Cover by Frank Frazetta
Foreword by Ray Bradbury
There was an old woman by Graham Ingels
The screaming woman by Jack Kamen
Touch and go by Johnny Craig
The small assassin by George Evans
The handler by Graham Ingels
The lake by Joe Orlando
The coffin by Jack Davis
Let's play poison by Jack Davis

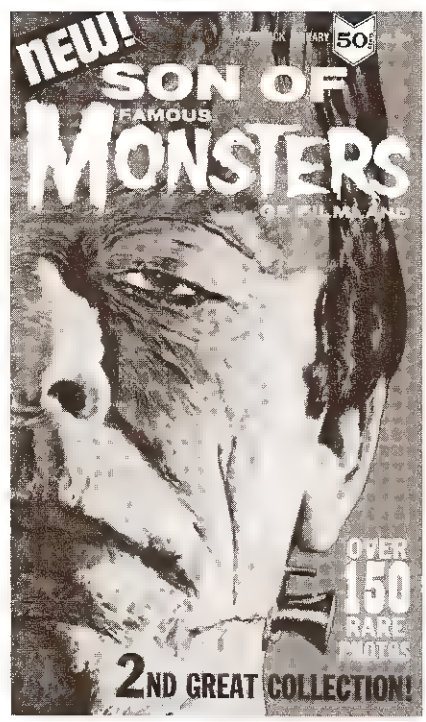
Tomorrow Midnight (Ballantine 1966)
Cover by Frank Frazetta
Punishment without crime by Jack Kamen
I, Rocket by Al Williamson
King of the grey spaces by Severin / Elder
The one who waits by Al Williamson
The long years by Joe Orlando
There will come soft rains by Wally Wood
Mars is Heaven by Wally Wood
Outcast of the stars by Joe Orlando

Christopher Lee's Treasury of Terror (Pyramid 1966)
Introduction by Christopher Lee
The Mark of the Beast (Rudyard Kipling) by Johnny Craig
Wentworth's Day (HP Lovecraft / August Derleth) by Russ Jones
The Past Master (Robert Bloch) by Alden McWilliams
The Death of Halpen Frayser (Ambrose Bierce) by Frank Bolle
Dracula's Guest (Bram Stoker) by Frank Bolle

The Best of Creepy (Tempo 1971)
Cover by Frank Frazetta
Introduction: 'The spell of seven sorcerers' by James Warren
Sand doom by Al Williamson





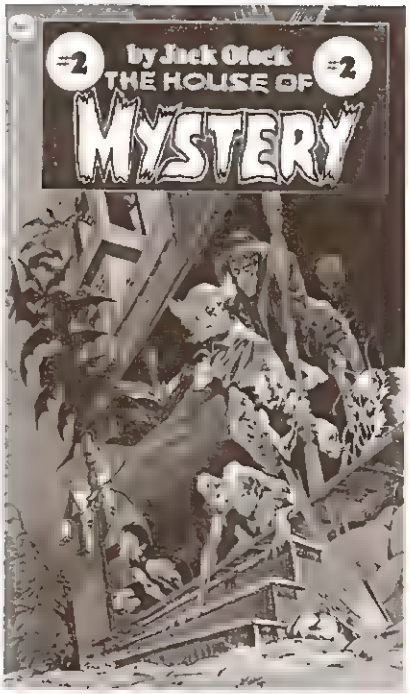


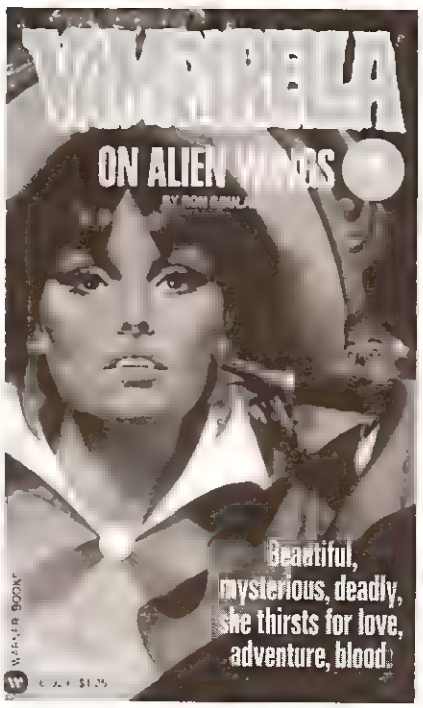
Overworked by Wally Wood
Untimely tomb by Angelo Torres
Vampires fly at dusk by Reed Crandall
Werewolf by Frank Frazetta
Grave undertaking by Alex Toth
Curse of the full moon by Reed Crandall
Collector's edition by Steve Ditko

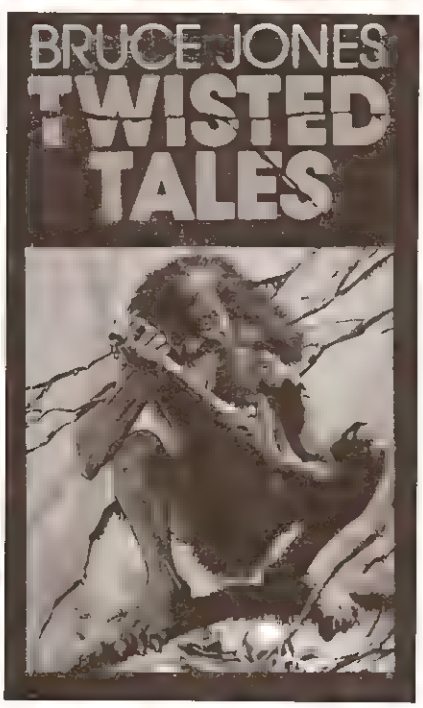
The House of Mystery #1 by Jack Oleck (Warner Paperback Library 1973)
Cover and illustrations by Bernie Wrightson
Chamber of horrors
Nightmare
Collectors item
Born loser
Tomorrow, the world
The haunting
You only die once
Act of grace

The House of Mystery #2 by Jack Oleck (Warner Paperback Library 1973)
Cover and illustrations by Bernie Wrightson
Wolf spawn
Sweet smell of success
Island of the damned
Where dead men walk
Message from beyond
Sacrifice
Never say die
Donovan's demon

Twisted Tales by Bruce Jones (Blackthorne 1987)
Cover by Richard Corben
The waiting game
Roomers
The Hollow
Pride of the fleet
Jessie's friend
Over his head
Black Death
Cycle
Good neighbour
Children of the stars
The apartment
Rendezvous
Members only







BASED ON THE CULT-CLASSIC CARD SERIES!

MARS ATTACKS

BY PETER "HE COMES IN PIECES" NORMANTON

Why didn't they see it when they assembled this team to once again wreak havoc across the face of North America, this time armed with a set of wretched cards! You could say it was payback time for the scourge that followed in the wake of November 1954. Those misguided do-gooders from a decade past may have driven a stake into the heart of the malfeasance that was EC, but they never bargained on the terror once again invading their sheltered lives, this time disguised in packs of seemingly innocuous bubble gum cards. The evolution of Mars Attacks was a surreptitious continuance of the abomination spawned by EC only a few years before. History has documented how Bill Gaines and his merry crew had fallen foul of those who could conspire to their detriment. Thankfully it also records how this company didn't simply lie down and die. It was to bequeath in its passage a legacy, one that has lived on into the twenty-first century and one whose diabolical machinations unwittingly conspired to unleash Mars Attacks.

Prior to Mars Attacks both Len and Woody had been the brains behind the proclaimed historical card set "Civil War News", its ferocity was to seal this series' own place in history. Although returned to the terror marching through Wally Wood's chilling cover from Weird Science #16, it was the catalyst that was eventually consummated as the most celebrated set of cards to ever be torn from a bubble gum wrapper. Len Brown recalls both this and H. G. Wells' "War of the Worlds" as being the root of his and fellow creator Woody Gelman's inspiration. By his own admission Len confesses to cutting up the cover to Weird Science #16 and presenting it to Woody as an idea for a set of cards. It's hardly surprising, the images evoked here and in Wells' original are the essence of the worst nightmare and in designing hands could become visibly more terrifying. In outlawing the excesses of the pre-Code years, the authorities had done much to heighten the craving within a morbid band for these macabre tales and this refused to lay dormant.

Above Michael T. Gilbert's Mr Monster #5, Earl Norem's back cover to Mars Attacks #1, Wally Wood however was the man who started it all with Weird Science #16, the finale to "Down to Earth" appears across the page.

There was always a desire to innovate amongst the staff at EC, but in doing so they inadvertently planted their deranged seed to corrupt a generation of creative talent. This particular episode some of the so-called history in these cards is at best tenuous, the kids loved them so why not take their love of insane science fiction and add the ingredient they loved to indulge, gore! Surely it was a

recipe with a guarantee of success.

By a strange twist of fate, it was the man whose disturbing image had been the inspiration for this series that found himself enlisted to join the project, which at this point was known as "Attack from Space." Wally Wood was to provide many early drafts for the prospective cards. He took on board Len Brown's suggestion of using the image of the Metaluna mutants from "This Island Earth" and these became the basis for the Martians seen in the final series. Unfortunately Wally's version of the cards did not have the impact Len was looking for. Bob Powell, another villainous perpetrator from the pre-Code epoch showed himself to be the man with the insight to transform Len's vision into what would become a terrifying prodigy. His ability to draw upon the intensity of the pulps was instrumental in ensuring the success of this series. Previously he had been a regular contributor to both Harvey and Fawcett's line of horror comics and later turned out some exemplary work for Atlas and Prize/Crestwood. Norman Saunders, whose work had graced the covers of countless pulps and also appeared on some of Fawcett's pre-Code covers, was assigned as the artist to paint the series. He applied his brush strokes over the tight pencil work already rendered by Bob. Norman wasn't only admired as a formidable talent, he also had a reputation as an amazingly prolific artist, he could paint at the rate of a card per day on a canvas only one and half times the size of the actual card. When you admire the detail in the cards this almost defies belief, but Norman was a seasoned professional.

The cards made their appearance in 1962, published by Bubbles Inc., a company better known as Topps. There is a suggestion Topps anticipated a backlash to the series before it had gone to press, so Bubbles Inc. was substituted as the fall guy. The president of the company had already seen Norman Saunders' paintings and insisted they be toned down, adding clothes to the distressed damsels and flesh to the charred corpses. On the back of each card was an accompanying piece of text scribed by Len Brown, his words worked to suffuse the terror

THE SCIENTIST WHO IS PRACTICING HIS SPEECH BEFORE HIS WIFE FOLLOWS HER GLANCE OUT OF THE WINDOW AND INTO THE NEW MEXICO NIGHT SKY...
LOOK, GEORGE! THAT LIGHT... IN THE SKY! IT'S MOVING...
BUT NOBODY FLIES ANYMORE! IT MUST BE..
THE LIGHT GROWS BRIGHTER! SOON ITS SOURCE IS CLEARLY VISIBLE
GEORGE! IT'S IT'S A FLYING SAUCER!
GOOD LORD! IT'S LANDING!
THE WEIRDLY SHAPED CRAFT SLIPS EARTHWARD AND COMES TO REST NEAR THE SCIENTIST'S HOME...
THEY'RE AFTER ME, SARAH! THEY'RE AFTER ME BECAUSE I'M RIGHT!
THE THINGS COME FROM THE DISC-SHAPED SHIP! THEY MOVE SWIFTLY... SILENTLY
GEORGE! LOCK THE DOORS! QUICKLY! BOLT THE WINDOWS!
IT WOULDN'T DO ANY GOOD, SARAH!
GEORGE IS RIGHT! THE HEAVY FRONT DOOR MELTS AWAY AS THE THINGS COME THROUGH...
THEY'RE GOING TO KILL US, SARAH! KILL US FOR WHAT WE KNOW!
OH, GEORGE! SOB! GEORGE!
DEATH COMES SWIFTLY TO THE SCIENTIST AND HIS WIFE...
AND AS THE SILVERY DISC HURTL SKYWARD, A THIN WHISP OF SMO RISES FROM THE TINY RANCH HOU CHIMNEY! INSIDE, A FLICKERING FLAME DIES! THE REPORTS... THE RESEARCH... THE THEORIES... LIE A NEAT PILE OF BLACK ASHES...

Ken Steacy continued the destruction on the cover of Mars Attacks 1 "Counterstrike" and Dimitri Patelis handled the cannibalism with #3. Finally the latest appearance of the Martians in Mr. Monster, introduced by Alex Horley.

already found in these graphic displays. While the series was hampered by limited distribution, much like EC's titles were towards the end of their life, the kids were still eager to get their hands on them. So unfortunately were their parents, but for entirely different reasons. When they saw the gory excess spilling forth from these cards and the salacious scenes of scantily clad women being torn down by the Martian aggressors

there was an outcry. It shouldn't be compared to the furore that swept through the United States a decade before, but it did permeate the more sensitive echelons at Topps. The company never issued a directive to withdraw these cards from the shelves, but production did come to a premature end only six months into production. It might seem hard to believe but even as late as 1984 when thirteen of these cards were released as a limited edition set by Rosem Enterprises, much of this titillating excess was once again toned down. The women were forced to suffer further indignity, being re-painted as either men or boys. 1984 was a very strange year!

More than twenty years after the event I discovered Mars Attacks, well in a fashion. What I still consider to be my first encounter with the phenomena was referred to in the pages of the eighth issue of the short lived Alien Worlds, by then appearing under the Eclipse imprint. The cover to this issue, meticulously painted by John Pound, harked back to Wally Wood's unforgettable scene from Weird Science 16. Even in the sophisticated computer based world of the eighties there was still plenty of room for a blast of science fiction from the past. John's interpretation of the huge brained creatures and their saucer technology was indeed a homage to the legendary EC covers of Wally Wood with artist friends of his modelling as the characters falling foul of the alien invaders. He was perhaps a little too young to appreciate the original cards but can recall seeing them, the experience he describes as being "pretty intense." However once he discovered Famous Monsters of Filmland a year or so later he found himself sucked into this world of terror. If you have this issue take another look at the building in the background. It's the local Arcata theatre from John's hometown with the word Pacific emblazoned into the stonework. Sadly Pacific, only a few years into their run as a comic book publisher were defunct, already a thing of the past.

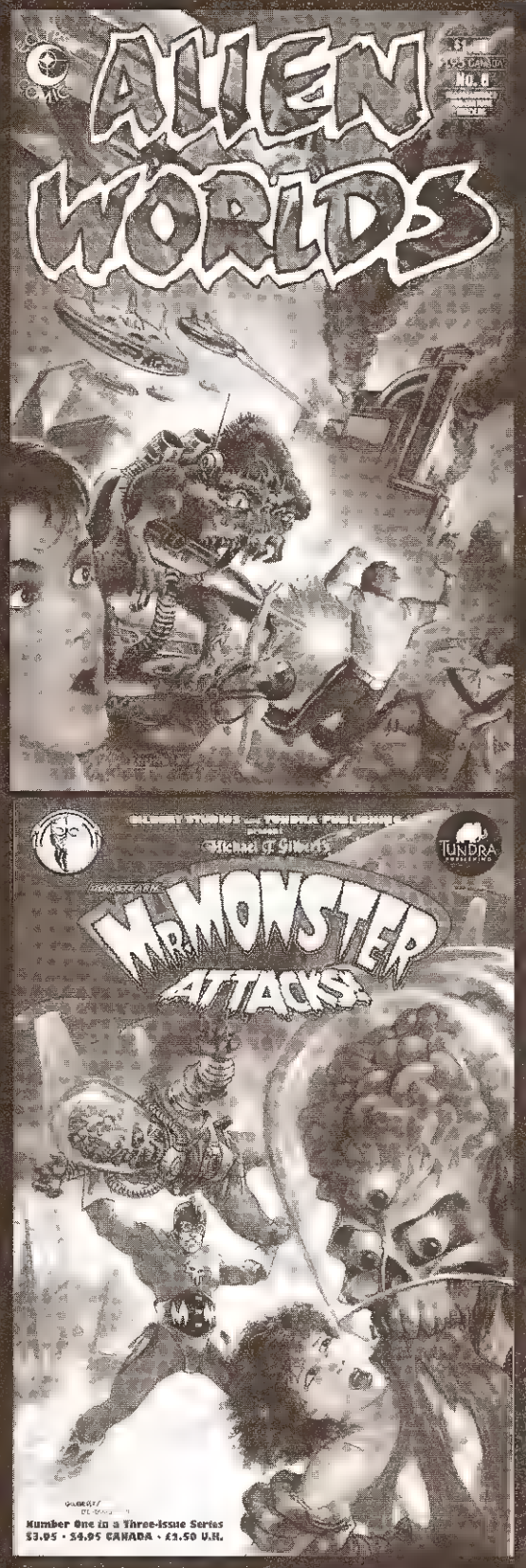
The story "Collector's Item" written by Bruce Jones and drawn by Ken Steacy evoked so many memories of childhood card collecting. The kids in this tale were depicted rushing to the local store on their bicycles in hope of finding a brand new batch of "Venus Invades." For fans of the Mars Attacks series there were some memorable references, "The Invasion Begins", "Dissolving Humans", "Roasting The Family Cat" "Bombing the Whitehouse" and "Venusian Food". The finale

was so typical of Bruce at this time, anything else would have served to disappoint, let's just say one of the kids was to regret his yearning for that tough to find first card in the series. I can still remember reading this story and feeling a haunting sense of déjà vu. Ken Steacy's send up of Norman Saunders' original paintings were so familiar, to this day I wonder if I ever caught as glimpse of these cards at an older friend's house, but most of them were addicted to the soccer cards of the day… okay, me included.

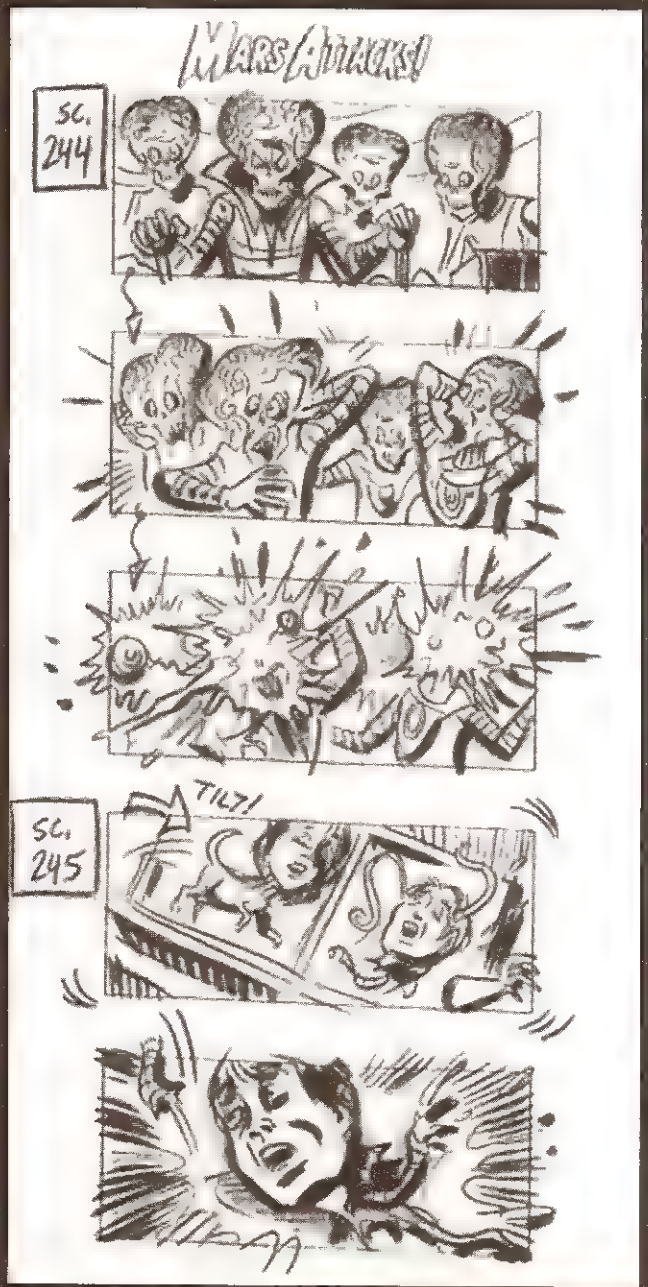
The menace that was once Mars Attacks, now refused to be thwarted. Michael T. Gilbert, inspired by Wells' War of the Worlds, introduced the Martian threat to the pages of Mr. Monster #5. Norman Saunder's painted cards would one day have an effect on him, but Michael was initially influenced by the 1953 film "Invaders From Mars", a nostalgic but chilling piece of small town Americana. The film's innocent domesticity would have been appreciably disturbing to any child of the time; its parochial setting being a little too close to home. Watching this film, how could you not believe there really were monsters out there, right at the end of the garden. Was Michael subconsciously trying to put pay to his childhood fears in showing the invaders from Mars cowering in Doc Stearn's laboratory on the cover to this issue? We can only wonder. The story within "The Invaders from Mars" was clearly inspired by Wells' masterpiece, scripted and partly pencilled by Roger Stewart, with a twist so typical of the series. It is another of those episodes, which is well worth tracking down, appearing at a time when horror comics had virtually been given the last rites.

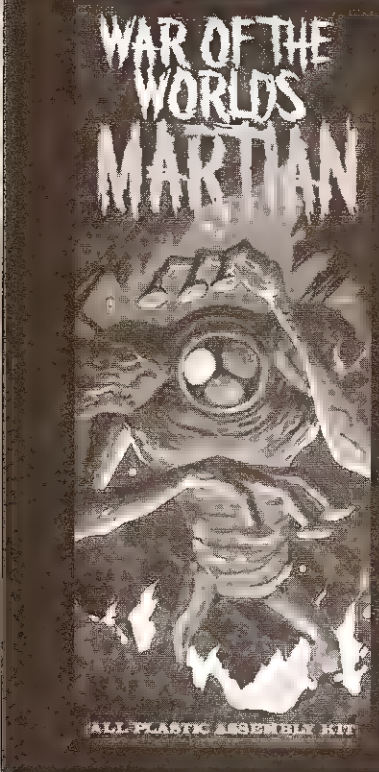
The young trick or treating artist to be then chanced upon Mars Attacks, this would have been on one of his annual Halloween jaunts during the early 1960s. He was never to forget these cards, their impression was akin to that which he had experienced with "Invaders from Mars" and it was to manifest itself when he became a comic book creator in his own right. A few years after Mr Monster #5's 1986 appearance he went all the way in Tundra's Mr. Monster Attacks. Dave Dorman applied the brush strokes to the cover for the first issue, pencilled by Michael. The result was an image worthy of any horror- science fiction fan's collection; it encapsulated so much of the outrage found in the original cards. The contents to this issue weren't to be sniffed at either. "Black and White and Dead All Over" presented the kind of Mr Monster madness for which his fans had come to clamour. Here, Michael's art contained more than a hint of past masters such as Will Eisner and Gerry Grandenetti, with an alien invader thrown in for good measure. How could you go wrong! The portfolio "The Martians: A Day in the Life!" will one day prove an essential addition to any collector of Martian memorabilia, while the pathos in the finale "Wish You Were Here", rendered by both Michael and Dave Gibbons, was reminiscent of EC's science fiction titles.

Only recently Michael returned with Mr. Monster versus The Nazis from Mars published by Atomeka. This is a take upon what would have happened if Mr



Across the page those missing cards from "Venus Invades" which appeared in Alien Worlds 8. At the very top there's a chance to see the obscure four issues of the Pocket Comics series. Above John Pound's homage to Wally Wood from the cover of Alien Worlds 8 and the first issue of Tundra's Mr. Monster Attacks laid out by Michael T. Gilbert with finishes by Dave Dorman.





Pete von Sholly was kind enough to send over this story board from Tim Burton's outrageous film "Mars Attacks". You can check out more of these images at Pete's site www.vonshollywood.com. He has also been hard at work designing another of his Auroma model kits, at least I hope this is a model!

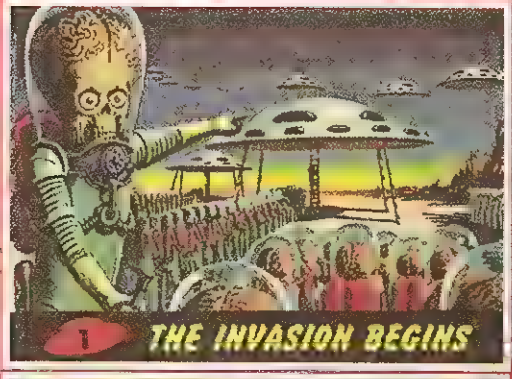
Monster had led the fight against the Martian invaders seen in the Topps card series. The opening chapter is very much inspired by the 1953 "Invaders from Mars" and as the story continues the usual mayhem ensues with an appearance of Adolf Hitler, making this another title to put on your wants list. George Freemen's rendition of Michael's layouts fits the bill perfectly!

While Mr. Monster battled on in his own inimitable way against these invaders from the Red Planet, Pocket Comics began work on producing a run of tiny (3" x 4.5") comic books based upon the Mars Attacks cards. Each issue was to include one of the original cards as its centrefold and then expand upon this image to tell the story of this ill-fated invasion. In keeping with the original series fifty-four of these mini-comics were scheduled, to commence in 1988. After a favourable release, the orders took a significant tumble with only four issues ever appearing.

Six years later Topps finally released Mars Attacks as a mini series in comic book form. These five issues scripted by Keith Giffen and drawn by Charles Adlard at long last gave the fans another glimpse of this Martian terror. A back up feature also included Tom Sutton's interpretation of these warmongering creatures; his style seemed unusually at home with these Martian reprobates. The back covers accompanying this tale, contained artwork by Earl Norem and John Pound, these stirred up so many memories of the original cards. The comic book also introduced an unknown race of Martians never seen in the set from 1962; these had a third eye. Unbeknown to the kids who chased these cards down over four decades ago, Wally Wood and Bob Powell had sketched these creatures in their original designs, unfortunately they were never approved for the final set. These sketches were published in 1980 by Darkstar Marketing as The Mars Attacks Portfolio of Roughs.

Topps' mini series paved the way for a follow up "Counterstrike" in 1995 and with Tim Burton's movie on the way you would have expected Mars Attacks' future in comic books to be assured, but this wasn't the case. A large part of the cinema going public never understood the movie. They would never have considered it a send up of a set of banned bubble gum cards, that was unfortunately lost on them. If they had seen the cards and had been fans of the halcyon golden age of cinema science fiction at any stage of their lives, just maybe they might have got there. Tim showed he had an implicit knowledge of the madness found in these cards of 1962 and turned out a tremendous job. This wasn't to save the comic, Topps struggled on to keep it but it just wasn't to be.

The set of 1962 was later expanded in 1989 with eleven additional cards, this time rendered by Herbe Trimpe and Earl Norem. These were not seen until the "archive" release of one hundred in 1994, but they are presented here. Most of them are derived from Wally Wood's sketches, maybe the more peaceful Paeec Martians were more than the men at Topps or was it Bubbles Inc. could stomach! A British version of the American originals does exist but this is considered by collectors to be a poor substitute for the original with the images not always as clear and criminally offset. Somehow I don't think Mars Attacks has been laid to rest. The sound of "Ack-ack-ack" may well echo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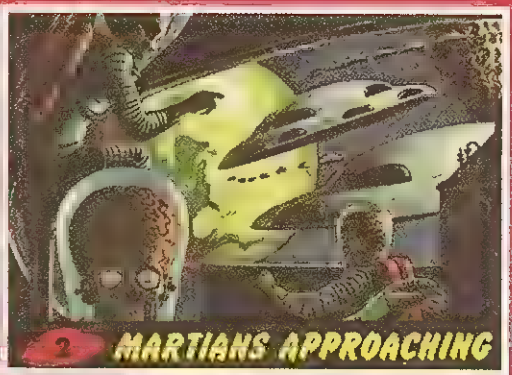
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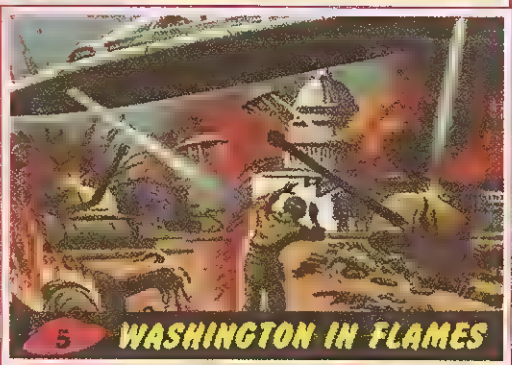
MARTIANS APPROACHING

3
ATTACKING AN ARMY BAS

4
SAUCERS BLAST OUR JETS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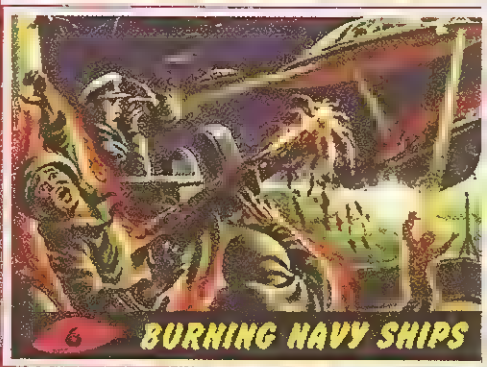
WASHINGTON IN FLAMES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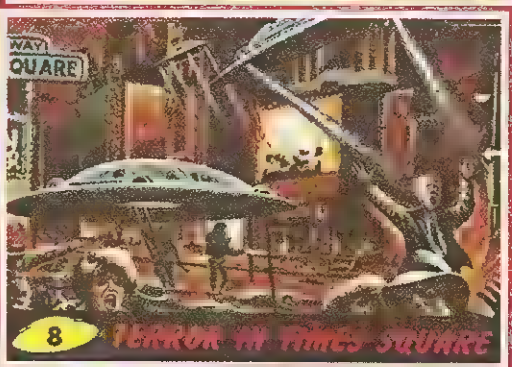
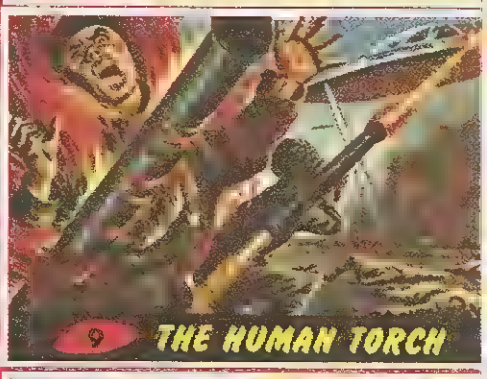
BURNING NAVY SHIPS

7
DESTROYING THE BRIDGE


WAY
QUARE
8
TERROR IN TIMES SQUARE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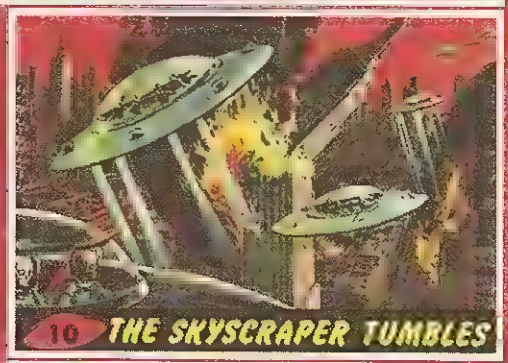
THE HUMAN TORCH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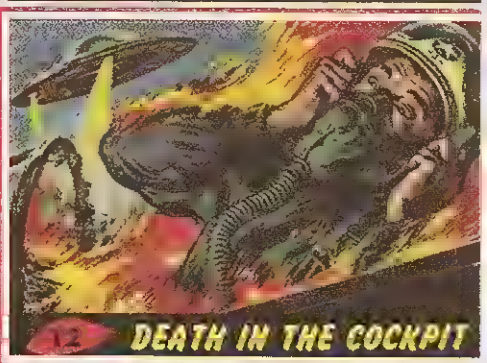
THE SKYSCRAPER TUMBLES

11
"DESTROY THE CITY"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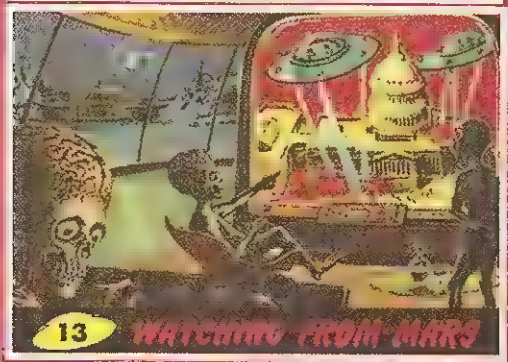
DEATH IN THE COCKPIT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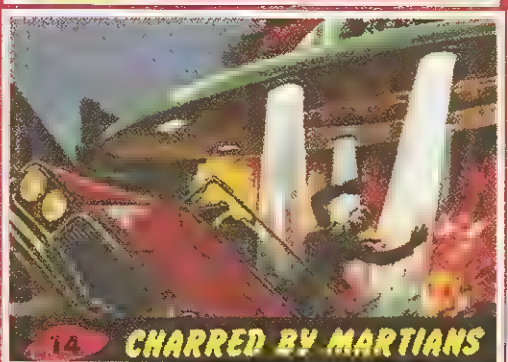
WATCHING FROM MARS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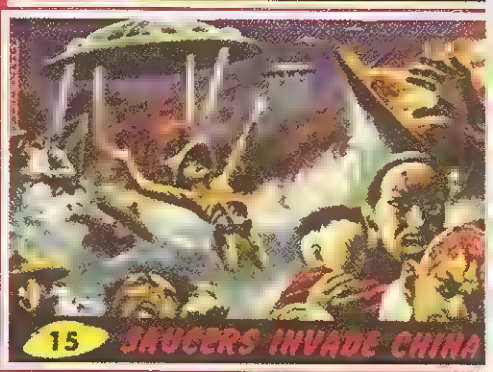
CHARRED BY MARTIANS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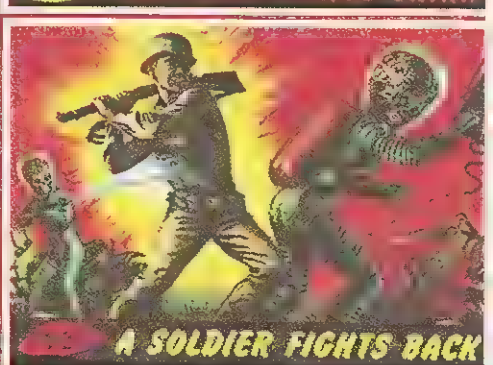
SAUCERS INVADE CHINA

16
PANIC IN PARLIAMENT

17
BEAST AND THE BEAUTY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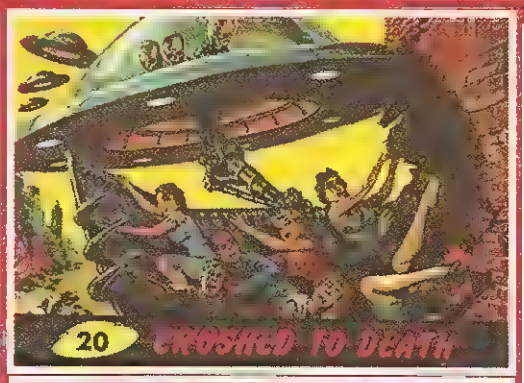
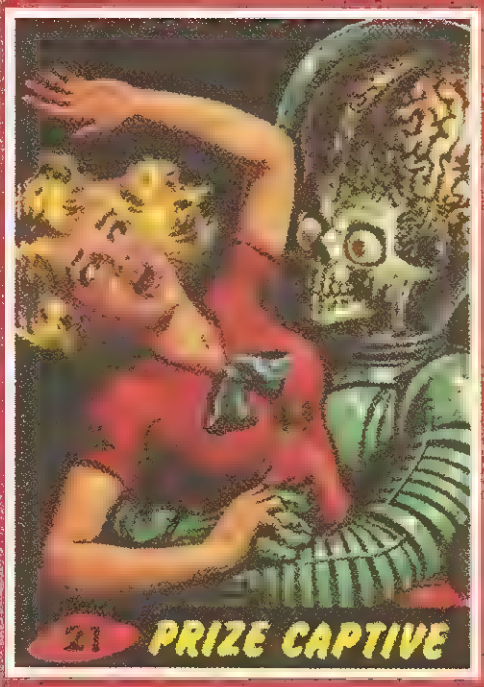
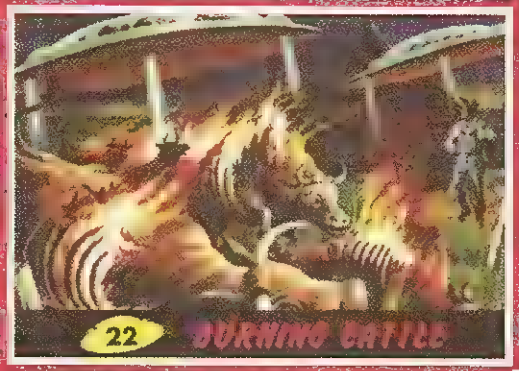
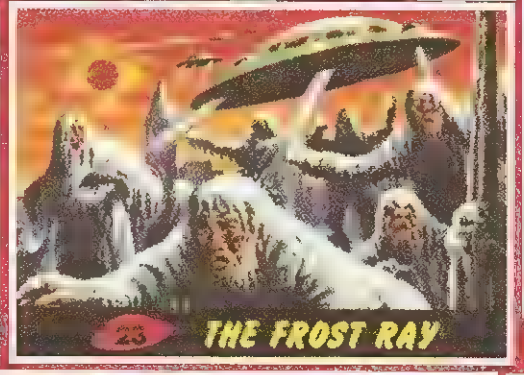
A SOLDIER FIGHTS BACK

19 BURNING FLESH


20 CROSHED TO DEATH

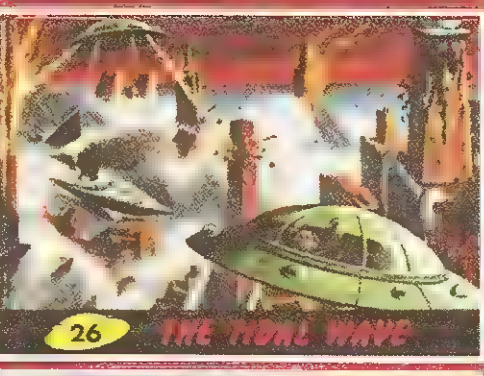

21 PRIZE CAPTIVE


22 BURNING CATTLE


23 THE FROST RAY

24 THE SHRINKING RAY

25 CAPTURING A MARTIAN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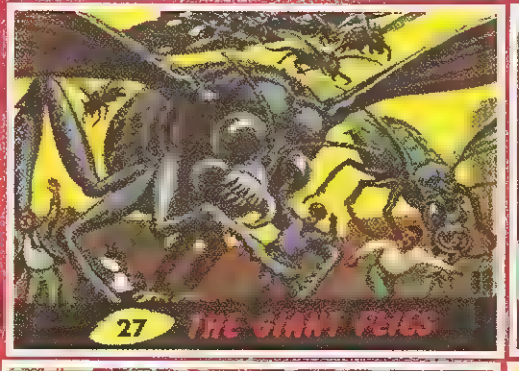
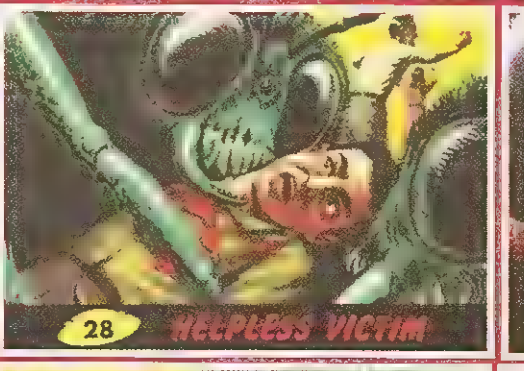
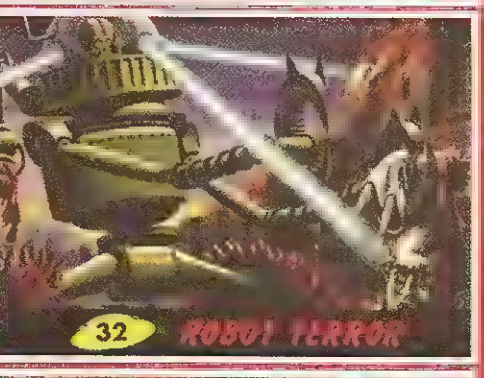

27 THE GIANT PEGS


28 HELPLESS VICTIM

29 DEATH IN THE SHELTER

30 TRAPPED!!

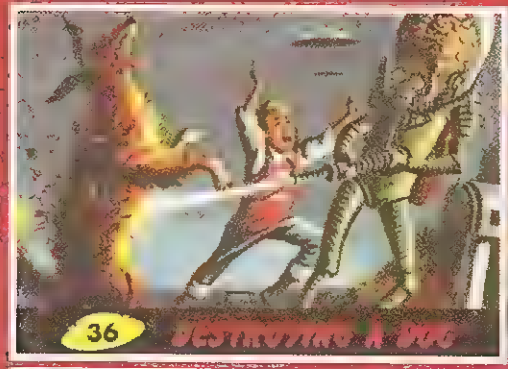
31 THE MONSTER REACHES IN


32 ROBOT TERROR

33 REMOVING THE VICTIMS

34 TERROR IN THE RAILROAD

35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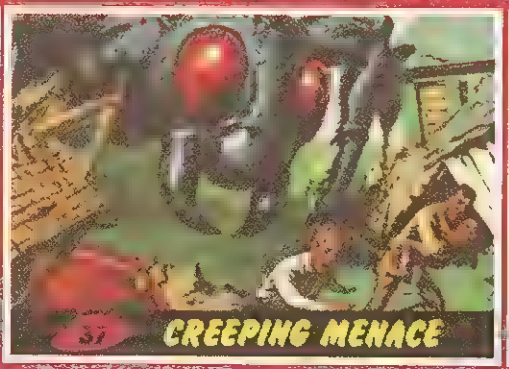
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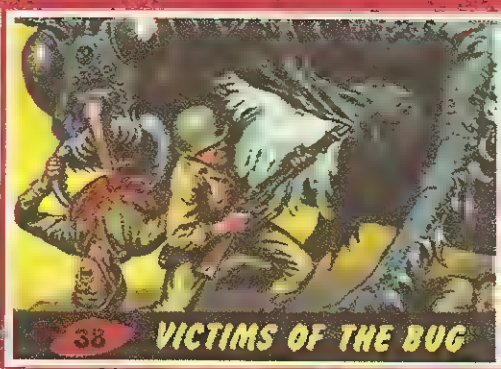
CREEPING MENACE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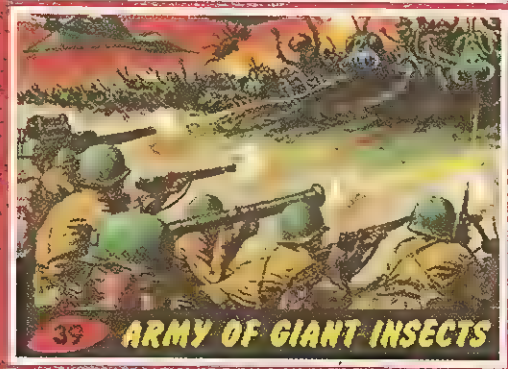
VICTIMS OF THE BUG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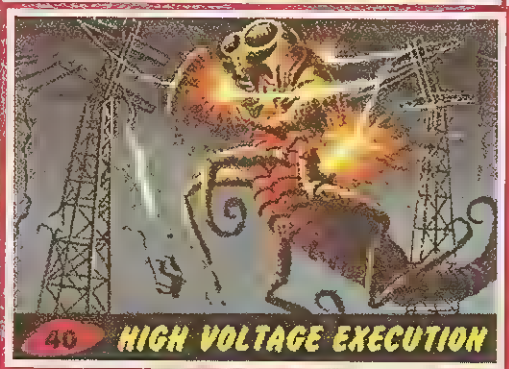
ARMY OF GIANT INSECTS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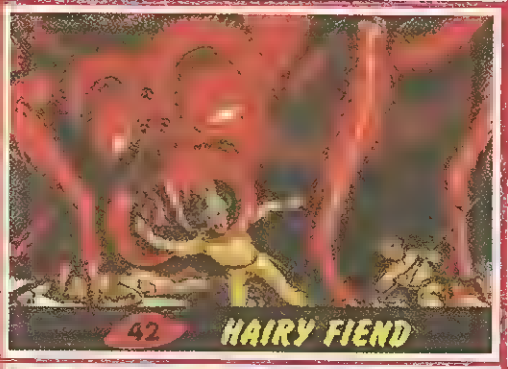
HIGH VOLTAGE EXECUTION

41
HORROR IN PARIS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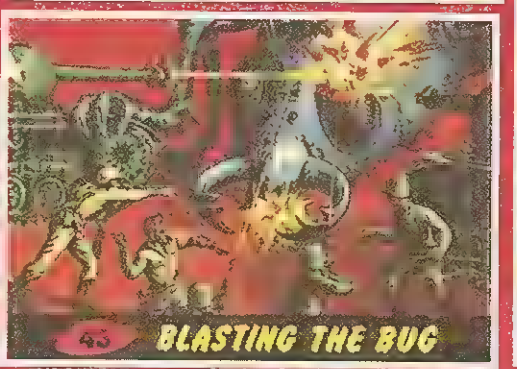
HAIRY FIEND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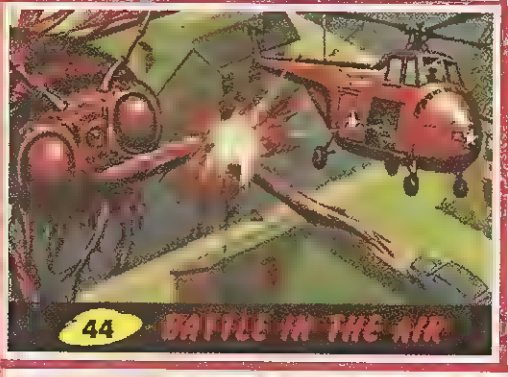
BLASTING THE BUG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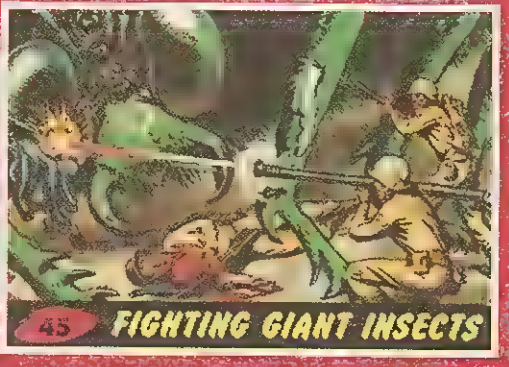
BATTLE IN THE AIR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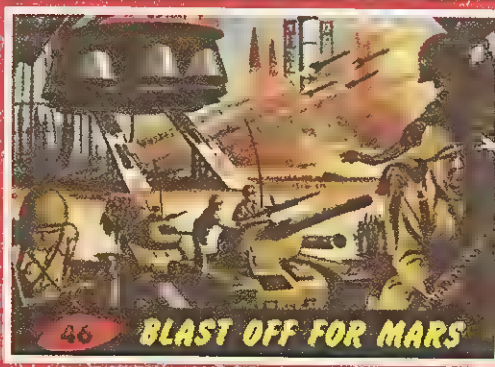
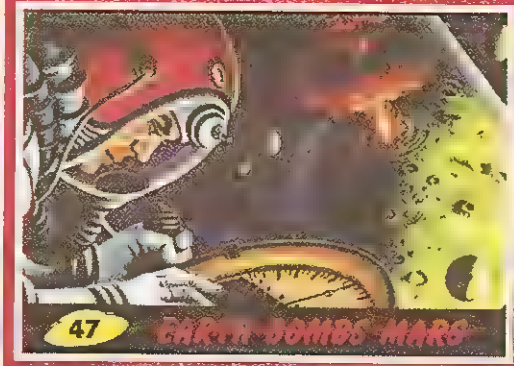
FIGHTING GIANT INSECTS


46
BLAST OFF FOR MARS

52
GIANT ROBOT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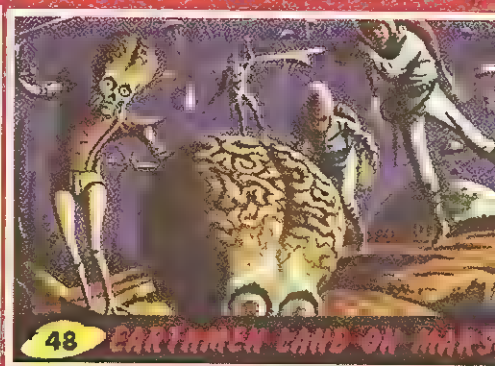
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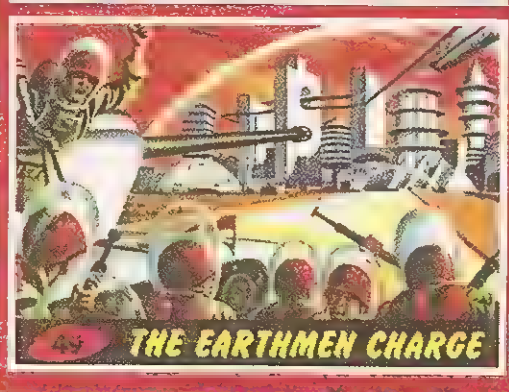
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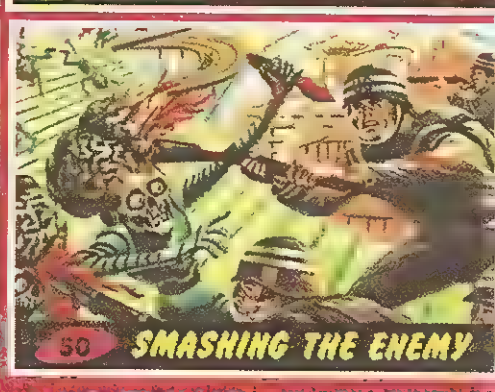
THE EARTHMEN CHARGE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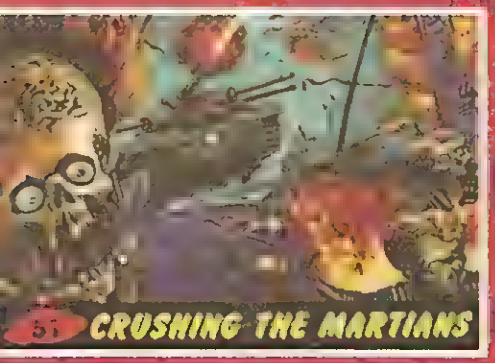
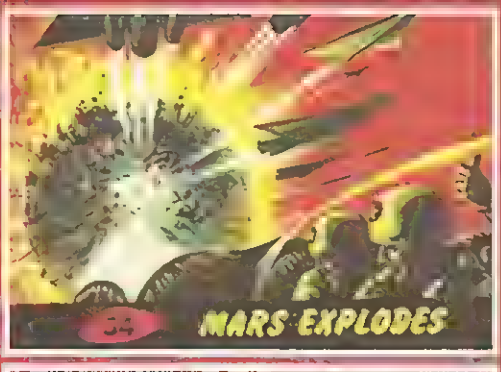
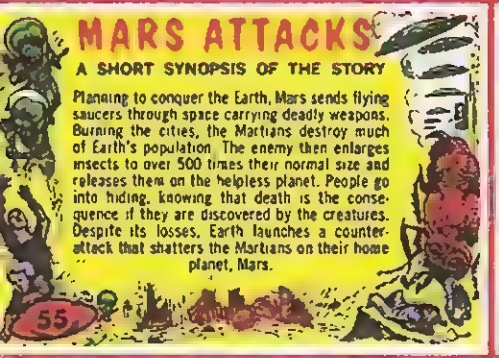
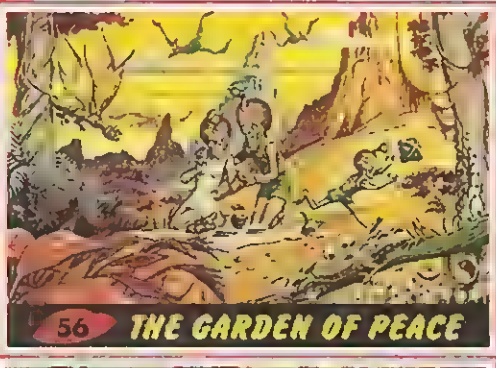
SMASHING THE ENEMY


51 CRUSHING THE MARTIANS

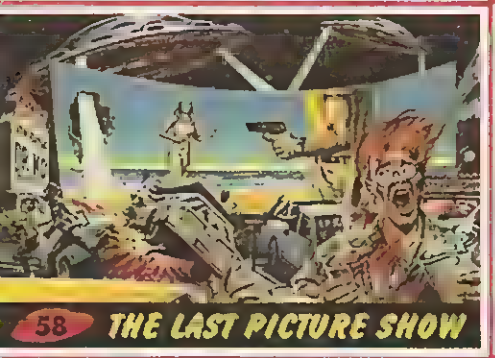
MARTIAN CITY IN RUINS

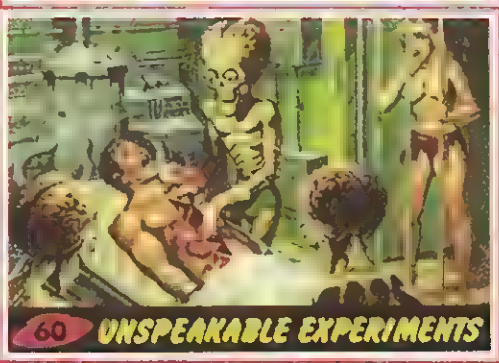

54 MARS EXPLODES

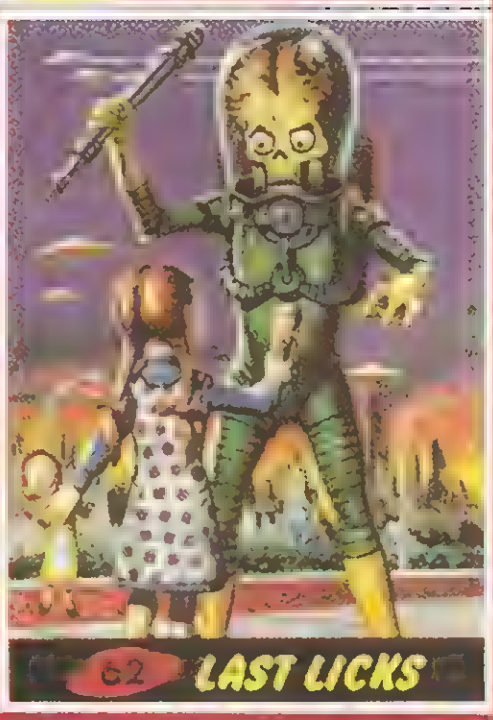

MARS ATTACKS
A SHORT SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY
Planning to conquer the Earth, Mars sends flying saucers through space carrying deadly weapons. Burning the cities, the Martians destroy much of Earth's population. The enemy then enlarges insects to over 500 times their normal size and releases them on the helpless planet. People go into hiding, knowing that death is the consequence if they are discovered by the creatures. Despite its losses, Earth launches a counter-attack that shatters the Martians on their home planet, Mars.
55

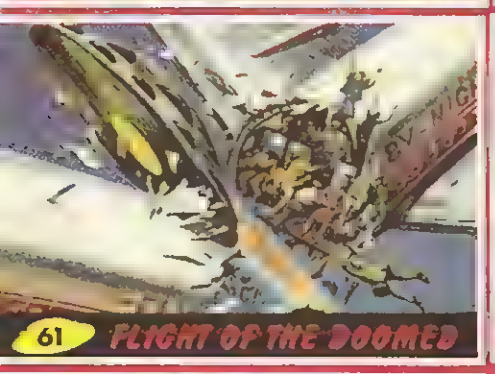

56 THE GARDEN OF PEACE

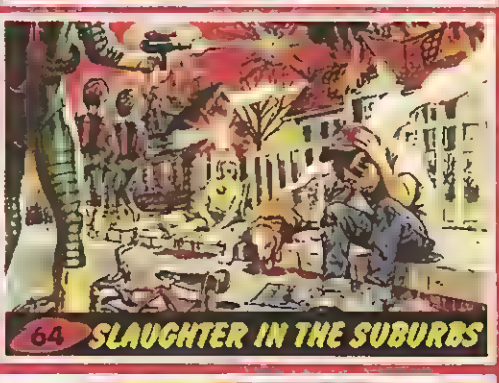
57 LATE NIGHT DISCOVERY

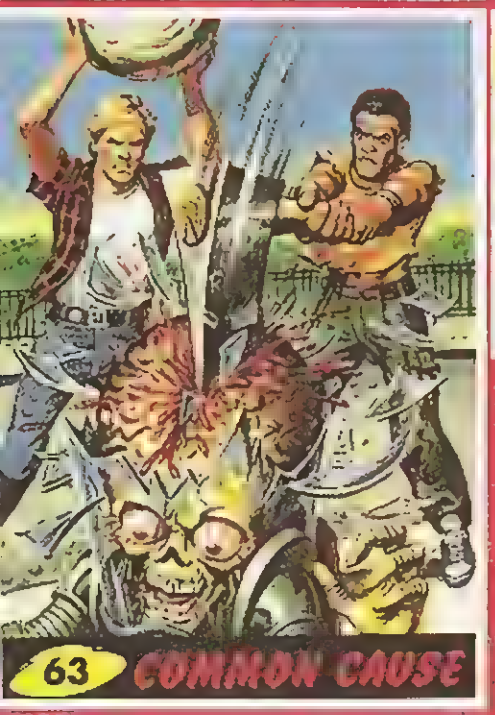

58 THE LAST PICTURE SHOW


60 UNSPEAKABLE EXPERIMENTS


62 LAST LICKS


61 FLIGHT OF THE DOOMED


64 SLAUGHTER IN THE SUBURBS


63 COMMON CAUSE

65 NAKED AND THE DEAD

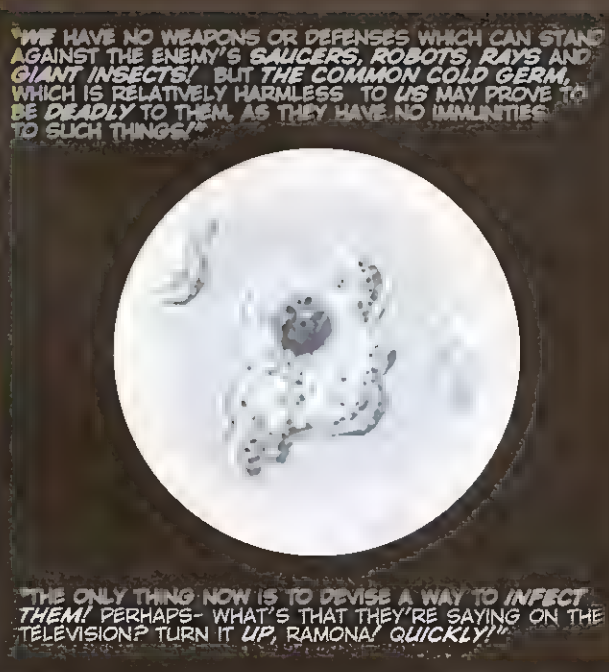
MARS ATTACKS
SPACE ADVENTURE
BUBBLE GUM
5¢

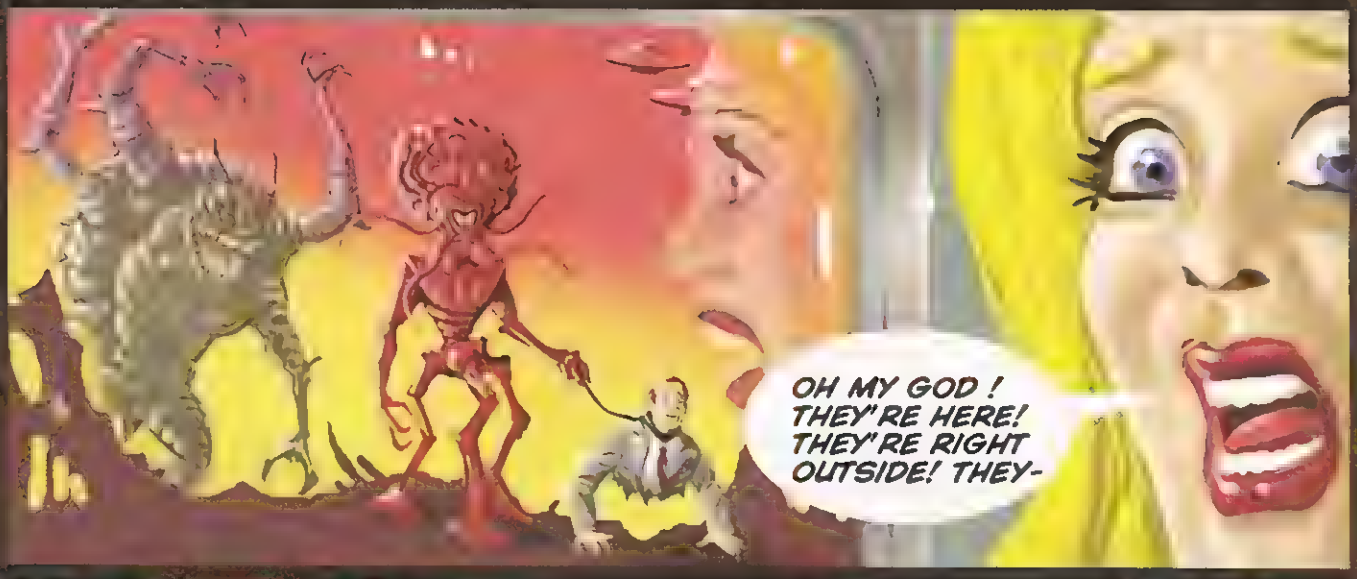
66 EARTH TRIUMPHANT

WEAPONS OF MARTIAN DESTRUCTION
with PROFESSOR SHERWOOD KELTON
"WELL, WE STARTED IT."
GZT! SQUEEE! GWIP!
BLEEP! SQUIT! PWEE!
KWEE?
"I MEAN, LET'S BE HONEST- WHO INVADED WHOM FIRST?"
WHAT THE FUCK?!?
BA-DOOM

"THE MARTIAN MILITARY LAUNCHED AN IMMEDIATE INVASIONARY FORCE! IT SEEMS THEY WANTED TO PREEMPT ANY FURTHER AGGRESSION ON OUR PART!"
"IN SHORT ORDER, THE EARTH WAS RINGED BY AN ARMADA OF DEADLY MARTIAN SAUCERS!"
OH, SHIT!
"AND IN WASHINGTON DC..."
"PREDICTABLY-"
YOU'RE IN CHARGE! I'LL BE IN THE SHELTER- LEVEL TWELVE! CALL ME WHEN IT'S OVERGOODLUCKSEEYA!
"AND IT WAS, AS THEY SAY, ON!"

THIS LED TO A FRANTIC CALL TO ME, PROFESSOR SHERWOOD KELTON, AT THE TOP SECRET FEDERAL BUREAU OF LAST RESORTS!
BUT PROFESSOR! YOU NEED TO EAT!
NOT NOW, RAMONA! FOOD CAN WAIT! I'M ON THE VERGE OF A BREAKTHROUGH!
AH! I THINK I HAVE IT!


"WE HAVE NO WEAPONS OR DEFENSES WHICH CAN STAND AGAINST THE ENEMY'S SAUCERS, ROBOTS, RAYS AND GIANT INSECTS! BUT THE COMMON COLD GERM, WHICH IS RELATIVELY HARMLESS TO US MAY PROVE TO BE DEADLY TO THEM, AS THEY HAVE NO IMMUNITIES TO SUCH THINGS!"
"THE ONLY THING NOW IS TO DEVISE A WAY TO INFECT THEM! PERHAPS- WHAT'S THAT THEY'RE SAYING ON THE TELEVISION? TURN IT UP, RAMONA! QUICKLY!"


OH MY GOD ! THEY'RE HERE! THEY'RE RIGHT OUTSIDE! THEY-

CRASH

"THINKING QUICKLY, IN THE MANNER OF A HIGHLY TRAINED SCIENTIST, I GRABBED THE *PEPPER SHAKER* THAT RAMONA DROPPED AND SHOOK THE GRANULATED HERB INTO THE AIR, *INHALING DEEPLY THROUGH MY NOSTRILS* AS I DID SO!"
"THIS OF COURSE PRECIPITATED THE DESIRED RESULT- A HUGE *SNEEZE* WHICH BLASTED MY HUMAN GERMS AT THE INVADER!"
YAAA-SHOOFF!

"SQUADRONS OF *PEPPER COPTERS* WERE RUSHED INTO ACTION DISPERSING THE LIFE-SAVING SUBSTANCE EVERYWHERE-INDUCING MASS *SNEEZING, GERM SPREADING* AND *MARTIAN DESTROYING HAVOC!* IN SHORT ORDER IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THE WORLD WAS SAVED!"
"FINALLY THE ENEMY WAS *ROUTED!* THEY FLED WITH THEIR REMAINING FORCES BACK TO THEIR WRETCHED PLANET- HUMBLED BEFORE THE TINY GERMS OF EARTH!"
THEY'RE *GOING*, PROFESSOR! *WE'VE WON!*
"AND SO IT SEEMED TO BE! *FEROCIOUS* AND *EVIL* AS THE MARTIANS WERE, IN THE END *WE* WERE VICTORIOUS!"
WELL, THAT'S *THAT.*
LET'S GET BACK TO THE *LAB*, RAMONA!
"BUT BACK IN THE LAB, WE MADE AN OMINOUS *DISCOVERY!*"

"WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME.. OH... OH NO GOD, NO!!"
BLIP! GWLIP!
"WHAT IS IT, PROFESSOR? WHAT'S GOING ON ?"
"IT'S THE MARTIAN GERMS! RELEASED WHEN THEIR BRAINS BEGAN TO EXPLODE.. THEY'RE NOW ADJUSTING AND BEGINNING TO PROLIFERATE WITH ASTONISHING SPEED!"
SLORK!
BLOP!
SQUERB! PLORCH!
"SHERWOOD KELTON'S FINAL REPORT! WE STARTED IT- AND WE'LL BE HERE FOR THE END! EEEYYYAAAARGHHH!"

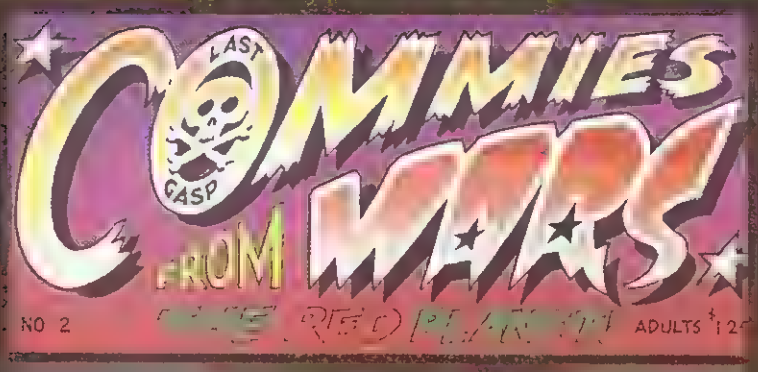
An Interview with

Tim Boxell

one of the original

COMMIES FROM MARS

by "The Commissar"
Peter Normanton



Each of the covers from Commies from Mars are now presented, the most infamous of which is John Pound's from issue #2. The original idea was to have two boys kidnapped by Martians but Tim Boxell and the crew at Last Gasp thought it needed more appeal. So the girls were added and then John went the whole way and included the White House. He always felt the beach scene for #3 and the Martian dentist for #4 were modest by comparison. Few comic book covers have ever matched up to this one!

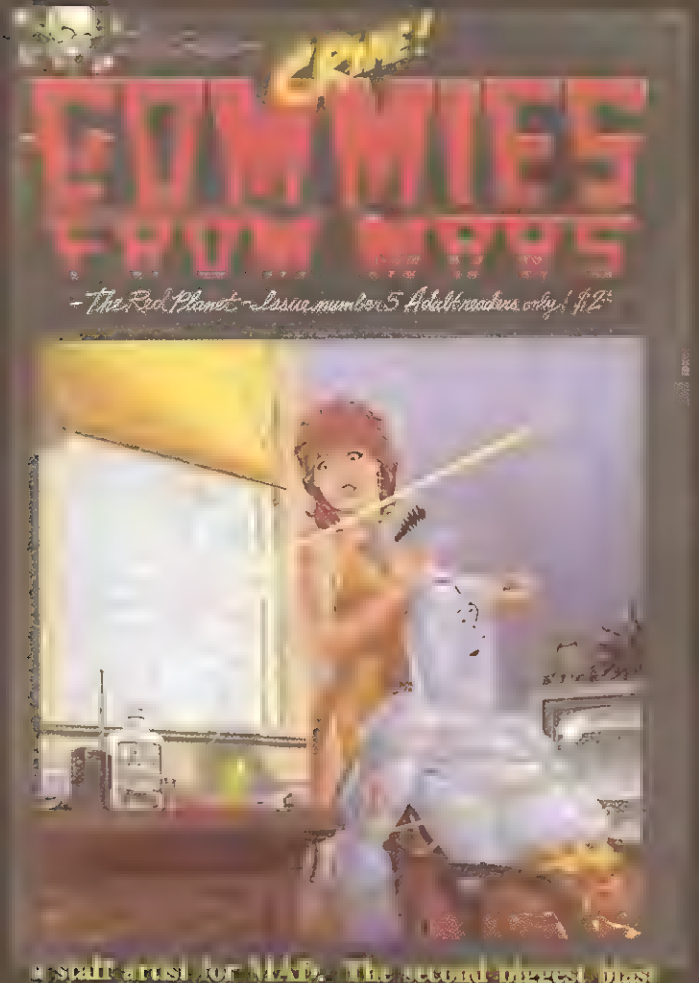
COMMIES FROM MARS
THE RED PLANET!
No. 1
50c
I'LL PLAY ALONG WITH THESE FILTHY COMMIE INVADERS FROM MARS UNTIL I CAN GET TO MY SHOTGUN IN THE CLOSET BUT I'M ALL AMERICANE

When I discovered Commies from Mars a few years ago courtesy of Frank Motler I couldn't believe what I was reading. This comic book seemed to revel in the extremes of political satire yet wasn't afraid to couple it with an outrageous form of science fiction. It also contained some unbelievable artwork, much of which was not gong to ever make it in the mainstream. Only six

issues ever appeared but they made quite an impact on the underground commix scene. Tim's been away from comic books for over ten years but in March of this year he kindly agreed to talk about those crazy days of the Commies from Mars.

Could you tell us something about your early influences, the comics you read and those that inspired you initially to follow a career in comix and illustration.

Loved all the early Marvel stuff when they were transitioning from horror and sci-fi to Fantastic Four and Spiderman. All the good ones influenced me, but it was really MAD that got me going. My dream job was to be



a staff artist for MAD. The second biggest blast was from the same source, EC Comics. The first paperback collection of stories from "Tales From the Crypt" completely flipped me out. Then the emergence of underground comix provided an unbelievable opportunity for creative and pushing the barriers.

Did you contribute to fan publications before becoming involved with the underground comix scene?

Yes. Weird stuff in the Minneapolis fan scene. Superhero stuff. Had my own "ditto" machine for printing them.

A "ditto" printing machine would have been a

young comic creator's dream back then. How did Commies from Mars come about?

The original 1950's film "Invaders From Mars" was an enormous influence on me. The whole thing of people in authority, even your parents, being altered

find it was all a dream and then the dream becomes reality was a jarring thing for a pre-teen to digest. So, with that in my brain, I reacted to a print advertisement in a German magazine, showing a very stiff couple preparing a drink for their kid. To me they looked like they were faking it (which they were-it's an ad, for God's sake), but I took a different approach to it by revealing the alien physiology clumsily concealed by masks, not fooling the kid at all. Denis Kitchen loved it and used it as a cover for a grab bag of stories.

What sort of editorial line did you take? When compared to the later issues there is precious little, if anything, in the way of peril from the red planet.

It was really Denis editing the first one.

Using the name "Grisly" work perfectly in the "Busy Signal" for this tale.While it revels in the vein of horror enjoyed by the undergrounds it harks back to the 1950s as does the style of this tale.

Yeah, I was fascinated by Graham Ingles who signed his work "Ghastly".

The title Commies from Mars seems so obvious in the Cold War years, one I would have thought would have been snapped up years before. It sounds like something from a pre-code horror story.

Yeah, you would think. To me it fused two things Americans feared in the '50's & '60's-communism and space (or any kind) aliens.

The first issue seemed to come out just as the underground comix movement reached its peek but when the Supreme Court ruled decisions on what was considered "obscene" things became potentially difficult. How did it affect you? Did you ever feel persecuted?

We never really worried too much by the time we were doing "Commies", but it was enough to scare Denis Kitchen away from **Image of the Beast**. The result was a long friendship with Last Gasp publisher Ron Turner who did it and "No Ducks" and "Commies".

I know there was talk of FBI infiltration into the counterculture generation. It sounds like something from 1950s McCarthyism!

Probably. Didn't know about it first hand.

After the unfortunate problems Denis Kitchen had had with his business in 1973 was there any desire to go and offer this title to him again?

Denis had his own stuff to deal with and I had moved to San Francisco. Dealing with Ron was just easier.

Did you find yourself paid with thousands of Commies from Mars #1?

No. Ron paid money. I do have a thousand of a few other less notable books.

What was your reaction to the pages not being in order of this first issue? It makes for one one hell of an interesting read!

That was very disappointing, but putting out a book of any kind is a challenge. Mistakes happen.

The first underground comic convention was held in Berkeley in the April the year Commies from Mars first appeared, were you able to attend?

No.

We had to wait until 1979 for the next issue. Six years is a long time, why did it take so long?

I think because I had gotten into doing work for various people with

WAR ON TH' MOON WUZ GRIM.
POG PLATOON WUZ THE TUFFEST, FIGHTIN'-EST UNIT ON TH' MOON!
I'M SARGEANT GRR! I LED TH' BOYZ ALL THE WAY FROM MARE IMBRIUM TO MORNCITY MANSIONS IN PURSUIT OF A GLIF PHOTON-GUN CONVOY!
UNFORTUNATELY, WE WUZ AMBERED WIT' D'IS DANGED BUNNY-RABBIT!
HEY SARGE!!
SSIGH E WODDAYA WANT NOW, RABBIT?
...ER...A CHOCOLATE CHIP ICE CREAM!
SPLAP!
GAWD HELP US ALL...

At the top of the page Tim's first tale with those darn Commies from Mars and above Hunt Emerson's strip from issue #2

YOU CAN BECOME A COMMIE FROM MARS!
JOIN THE EARTH OCCUPATIONAL FORCES NOW!
WE'RE GONNA DRAFT YOU ANYWAY!
"SIGH" THAT'S THE LIFE FOR ME!
THIS IS URK P. GORFLOK HE'S YOUNG HE'S PATRIOTIC. HE'S IDEALISTIC! BOY, HAS HE GOT A LOT TO LEARN! BUT FOR NOW, HE STILL BELIEVES IN...
THE COMMUNIST WAY
CONGRATULATIONS COMRADE YOU ARE NOW AN INDISPENSABLE ADDITION TO THE COMMUNIST FORCES! AN INSPIRATION TO THE CONTINUED ON NEXT PA... OOPS!
MOM! DAD! I'M OFF TO INVADE EARTH!
OFF TO SAVE THE MORALLY BANKRUPT EARTHLINGS FROM THEIR SHALLOW, MATERIALISTIC EXISTENCES!
WHAT AN HONOR! WHAT A MISSION! WHAT A STORY LINE!
DON'T SLAM THE DOOR GODDAMMIT!

Shawn Kerri's take on the Commies from Mars seen in issue #4.

Rich Larson and because I hadn't originally imagined it as a series.

Ws there a feeling the underground scene was on the wane?

No. It still felt pretty strong at that point.

You must have been proud of this one, it is an extraordinary issue. The John Pound cover is exceptional, almost iconic in the world of underground science fiction and horror comix. How do you get him interested in this project?

John is just the sweetest guy in the world along with being a great painter. The idea of the book struck a cord with him and he kicked out an amazing piece of art. It originally was just the one alien grabbing the terrified kid and then he expanded it to include the rest

How had your views of this title changed editorially? The element of political satire certainly isn't played down but there are still plenty of outrageous goings on.

Greg Irons put it best. The words **Commies From Mars** are like "abbracaddabra". They have meaning and power that differs from one person to the next. That's why I embraced the diversity of work my contributors came up with.

This series certainly was diverse. It was a pleasure to see Hunt Emerson in these pages. Over here in the UK he is very highly thought of.

Love Hunt. Great artist and fine fellow.

While you did encourage a variety of contributors are there any other creators you would have liked to have had on board?

I tried to get Kliban and Geof Darrow to contribute, but Geof was too busy and Kliban swore he couldn't write continuity.

With the counterculture movement pretty much dead and buried, was the lunacy of the Reagan years useful to a title like Commies from Mars?

Yes. I guess. It should also resonate now, since we have an even worse version of Reagan running this country.

I would have to agree with you there. When you look back at these six issues what do you consider to be the high points?

I need time to review them again, but I thought there was a lot of brilliant art and really screwy writing throughout. The best part was opening an envelope from England or Lima, Ohio or Eureka California and seeing some insane new story from the twisted talents I was working with.

Gerry Garcia wrote the forward to the collected series. This must have given you a real buzz. Was Gerry's or anybody else's music an influence?

My connection to Jerry was one of those very odd things. I was never a Dead Head, largely because the first two times I saw them when I was in college, they weren't very good. They had a reputation for being up and down in quality when playing live. Then in the early 80's I started working with Colossal Pictures, an animation studio in San Francisco that had achieved some notoriety for a crazy sequence in a Grateful Dead performance movie. I spent a lot of the first couple years there working on early stuff for MTV and **The Right Stuff** storyboard, design and directing. Rich Larson, who I'd already worked with on comics stuff for Sal Quartuccio and Charlton's horror books, came out to help me. One of the first big projects we did after The Right Stuff was to work on storyboards and conceptual art for "Sirens of Titan" a book Garcia, Richard Loren and another guy had the rights to. So I go from being someone who had no interest in the Dead to routine meetings with Garcia, who incidentally, turned me on to Stephen King, someone I thought was just another pop writer. Garcia was very fond of "The Stand" and there you go.

Over the course of **The Right Stuff**, which took a couple years, I heard the Dead play a couple great concerts. When they're "on" they're pretty amazing. My closeness to them resulted in another rather interesting "Commies" historical note. A famous Hollywood producer, Ray Stark, had come up with something like $15 mil to do a

Commies from Mars gets the treatment from S. Clay Wilson in the third appearance from 1980.

Grateful Dead movie. I wrote an outline for one in which the Dead played some key role in saving Earth from the bad aliens. If it had been up to Garcia, there would have been a Grateful Dead Commies from Mars movie. Alas, the Dead was a democracy and each of the guys had his own idea of what would make the best Dead movie. In the end Garcia was a casual friend and kind enough to add his words to my book.

Did you ever consider the Communists to be such a threat? It wasn't as big an issue over as it was presented in the States, except for the Cuban Missile crisis.

As a school child I grew up with Civil Defense sirens blaring and films teaching us to "Duck and Cover". I tried to get my Dad to build a bomb shelter in the back yard. For a period of time it sure seemed like a threat. "1984" scared the hell out of me.

Did the prospect of mainstream comic work ever attract you?

Sure. My dream as a teenager was to draw for **Mad**. There were plenty of cool things I would have enjoyed working on. I liked all the Warren mags like **Creepy** and **Eerie**. It's all about the love of creating verbal and visual images and getting a reaction from the audience.

How did you get into story boarding in film?

I'd worked in television and done an amount there. Colossal Pictures, hired me initially to draw and provide conceptual creative. **The Right Stuff** and **The Black Stallion Returns** were the first couple things I did. By the way Rich Larsen also worked with me on Eddie Murphy's **The Golden Child**. Storyboarding is just like comics, only you don't have to work as hard on the lettering or figuring out where to put the word balloons...

Are there any of these you are particularly proud of?

Yeah, oddly enough, I did work on a Cannon production of **Journey to the Center of the Earth** and got to do some really nice stuff with kids and creatures and caves. I've just done a

AT SAMS LIQUOR STORE
I WISH I COULD REMEMBER THE NAME OF THAT DAMN BEER HE WANTED!
I GUESS I'LL JUST PICK UP A SIX PACK OF BUD IF HE DOESN'T LIKE IT HE CAN WALK DOWN HERE AND PICK UP WHATEVER HE WANTS!
GOD! WHAT AN ODOR! BLOOD AND... BOY PETE'S SURE GOT SOME FUCKED UP NEIGHBORS!
THAT'S FUNNY! PETE NEVER LEAVES HIS DOOR OPEN!
CLARK
TSK, TSK. WHAT A SHAME! NEATH VENT, NIT DENTURES PETE'S JOINT'A NEED SOME TEETH REMICKED. FROM HIS FORMALIN NOT TO MENTION DOT PHONE SHTUCK IN HIS MOUDT. COULD CH... EXCUSE ME... I THINK HEAR MY PHONE OURGLING.
GO ONAHEAD WIT OUT ME...

"Grisly" comes to terrorise the first issue of the Commies in typical style.

I'M TOTALLY IMPRESSED!
I THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE IT!
THERE'S JUST ONE PROBLEM
WE'RE HAVING BIG TROUBLE DISTRIBUTING OUR MAGAZINES
I CAN HELP!
GREAT
WILL YOU EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT. I HAVE TO USE THE "LITTLE BOY'S ROOM"
YOU LOOK AROUND
WAIT!
I HAVE TO GO TOO!
WHERE'D HE GO?
YES, HE'S COMPLETELY UNDER MY MIND CONTROL! LET'S ROCKNROLL UP AND WIPING OUT
HEY!
"HE WOULD SOMETHING PRESS RELEASE" "THE A PIECE OF CAKE"
HAIL MARS!

Peter Kuper presents a familair face in the last issue of Commies from Mars.

thousand frames for a drama set in the 1930's which has been fun and allowed me to draw stuff I ordinarily don't draw. It's always fun getting paid to do something you like and do reasonably well.

What was it like when you got to step into the director's seat?

Pretty great. Working in New Zealand, a great place, shooting on Peter Jackson's stage. Second feature was even more fun with better actors and a great script. When it's good, nothing's better; when there's problems, you just have to remind yourself how many millions of people would give anything to do what you're doing.

What of future projects?

The most exciting one at the moment is **Machine Phase** a sci fi action flick designed and created by Dean Fowler. Go to www.machinephase.com and download the trailers and art. It will be incredible. I've written a bunch of other stuff I'm hoping makes it to the screen, including some pretty disturbing and entertaining horror...

Last of all would you ever be tempted to bring the commies back? They're still out there you know no matter what the press might say!

Yes. I'd love to. Drop them right into the world of terrorism and our "Homeland Security". Enough bad guys to fill a hundred issues.

Tim thanks for taking the time to do this interview.

Martian Comics, Selective Index

Title	No.	Publ.	Dates	Remarks
Advs Of The Big Boy	#6	Big Boy	c1957	*"Big Boy & The Men From Mars"* cover & story, 2 ed's, East & West coasts.
Amazing Adventures	#18	Marvel	May-73	1st *Killraven/ War Of The Worlds*, part Neal Adams art.
Attack On Planet Mars	nn	Avon	1951	based on book by Ray Cummings, Joe Kubert art, Gene Fawcette cover.
Batman	#78	DC	Sep-53	*"Manhunter From Mars!" Martian Manhunter* prototype. See Detective #225.
Bugs Bunny Fights The Man From Mars	nn	WB	1949	Mini Comic, giveaway, humour.
Buster Brown Goes To Mars	nn	Buster Brown	1958	Shoes store giveaway, humour.
Captain Science	#6	Youthful	Oct-51	*"The Red Devils of Mars!"* cover flash/ story.
Classics Illustrated	#124	Gilberton	Jan-55	*War Of The Worlds* by H.G. Wells, 1st adaptation in Comics, Cameron art.
Commies From Mars	#1-6	various	1973-87	Classic underground, also anthology The Collected Works.
Cosmo The Merry Martian	#1-6	Archie	1958-9	Biljo White covers/ art, humour.
Creepy	#2,4,8,9,12,13,15	Warren	1965-8	*Adam Link, Teacher From Mars* stories by Otto Binder/ Joe Orlando.
Creepy	#87	Warren	Mar-77	*"Planet Mars Special Issue,"* reprint anthology.
Crusader From Mars	#1-2	Z-D	1951	Norman Saunders covers.
Dell Giant	#27	Dell	1960	Reprints Mars and Beyond, Four Color #866.
Detective Comics	#225	DC	Nov-55	First *Manhunter From Mars*, numerous others since. See Batman #78
Four Color	#375,437,488, 866	Dell	various	see John Carter & Mars & Beyond.
Graphic Story Magazine	#13	Bill Spicer	1971	*Adam Link Robot Teacher From Mars* cover/ story.
Highball To Mars	nn	Kellogg's	1950's	Small size, giveaway.
House Of Mystery	#143-173	DC	1964-	*Martian Manhunter* covers (early issues) & stories in each.
Jim Solar Space Sheriff	Book 3	Vital	1953	*"In The Battle For Mars"* Small size giveaway.
John Carter of Mars	#375,437,488	Dell	1952-3	Four Color, 1st app. *John Carter.* Numerous others since, see Overstreet.
Lars Of Mars	#10, 11	Z-D/ Eclipse	1951/ 87	Murphy Anderson art. Also 3-D reprint, part new art.
Total War/ M.A.R.S. Patrol	#1-2/ 3-10	G.K.	1966-9	Alien invasion storyline. Wally Wood art #1-3.
Man O'Mars	#1	F.H/ I.W	1953/ 61	Space Rangers reprints, Anderson art, reprinted in c1961 with new cover.
Marge's Tubby Meets The Little Men From Mars	nn	G.K.	1964	giant edition, humour.
Mars and Beyond, Walt Disney's	#866	Dell	Dec-57	Four Color, part of Walt Disney's *"Man In Space"* series shown on US TV.
Mars Attacks	#1-4	Pocket Comics	1988	Small size. Intended as reprint of card set (55 issues), cancelled after 4 issues.
Mars Attacks	various	Topps	1995-7	Five series, based on Tim Burton movie & original Topps card set.
Mr Chips Meets The Cookie People Of Mars	nn			Quaker Oats 1965 Small sized, giveaway, humour.
Mr. District Attorney	#63	DC,	My'Jn-58	*"The Man In The Martian Suit"* Cover/ story.
My Favorite Martian	#1-9	Gold Key	1964-6	Based on TV series, Russ Manning art #1.
Ray Bradbury Comics: Martian Chronicles	V4#1	Topps	Jun-94	Michael Kaluta, Howard Simpson, & Del Barras art, Steranko cover.
Rex Dexter On Mars	#1	Fox	Fall-40	First Mars/ Martian Comic title. Also in The Eagle & Mystery Men.
Santa Claus Conquers The Martians	12-725-603	Dell	Mar-66	*Movie Classic* (adaptation). Three versions, also came with LP record.
Santa Takes A Trip To Mars	nn	Bradshaw-Diehl	1950	Christmas giveaway, humour.
Space Squadron/ Space Worlds	#1-6	Atlas	1951-3	features the Martian *MXXPTRM (Max)* as crew member.
Strange Adventures	#90, 152	DC	1958/ 63	Martian covers/ stories
Strange Tales	#78	Marvel	Nov-60	*"A Martian Walks Among Us!"* cover/ story.
Superman	#62	DC	1950	*"Black Magic On Mars!"* cover/ story, Orson Welles appearance.
Swing With Scooter	#4	DC	Jan. 1967	*"I Was A Teenage Martian's Bride"* cover/ story, humour.
Tales of the Unexpected	#33	DC	Jan-59	*"Martian Town U.S.A."* cover/ story.
Tales Of Suspense	#4	Marvel	Jly-59	*"One Of Us Is A Martian!"* cover/ story
Tales To Astonish	#2	Marvel	Mar-59	"My Job, To Capture A Martian!" cover/ story.
Tomorrow Midnight (paperback)	U2042	Ballentine	Jun-66	Bradbury reprints, including Mars stories from WF #17,21,22 & WS #17.
Triumph Over Space	nn	Kaiser-Fraser	1951	Motoring giveaway, featuring *Kay* from Planet Mars.
Weird Fantasy	#17	EC	Jan'Feb-53	*"There Will Come Soft Rains"* Bradbury Adaptation, Wood art.
Weird Fantasy	#21	EC	Sep'Oct—53	*"The Million-year Picnic"* Bradbury Adaptation, Severin Elder art
Weird Fantasy	#22	EC	Nov'Dec-53	*"The Silent Towns"* Bradbury Adaptation, Crandall art.
Weird Science	#17	EC	Jan'Feb-53	*"The Long Years"* Bradbury Adaptation, Orlando art.
Weird Science	#18	EC	Apr'May-53	*"Mars is Heaven"* Bradbury Adaptation, Wood art.
Weird Science Fantasy	#24,27-9	EC	1954-5	first *Adam Link* stories by EandO Binder, Joe Orlando art.

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All information researched and compiled by: Frank Motler, England. *A Fatboy Production* *January 2005*

Mars Is Heaven

Comic Books & The Exploration Of Space

by Frank *"Phobos"* Motler

Mars Seen From Deimos, by Chesley Bonestell

The Martians

Riding along the canal in their motorboat, excitable children Mike, Robert and Timmy are asking their mother and father questions. "*How far are we going, Dad?*" "*A Million Years*" is the father's solemn reply. Mother spots something on the horizon, "*Look, children there's a Dead City,*" "*Wow!*" "*Golly!*" Looking about for Martians, one asks his father "*What Do Martians look like?*" "*You'll know when you see them.*" After their picnic, they take turns to listen to broadcasts from Earth. Suddenly, father's face "*looked like one of those fallen Martian cities, caved in, sucked dry, almost dead.*" He passes the radio to his wife, "*Her lips drop open.*" Blinking his wet eyes, he announces grimly "*It's all over. The radio just went off the Atomic Beam. Every station on Earth is gone. The air is completely silent. It will probably remain silent.*"

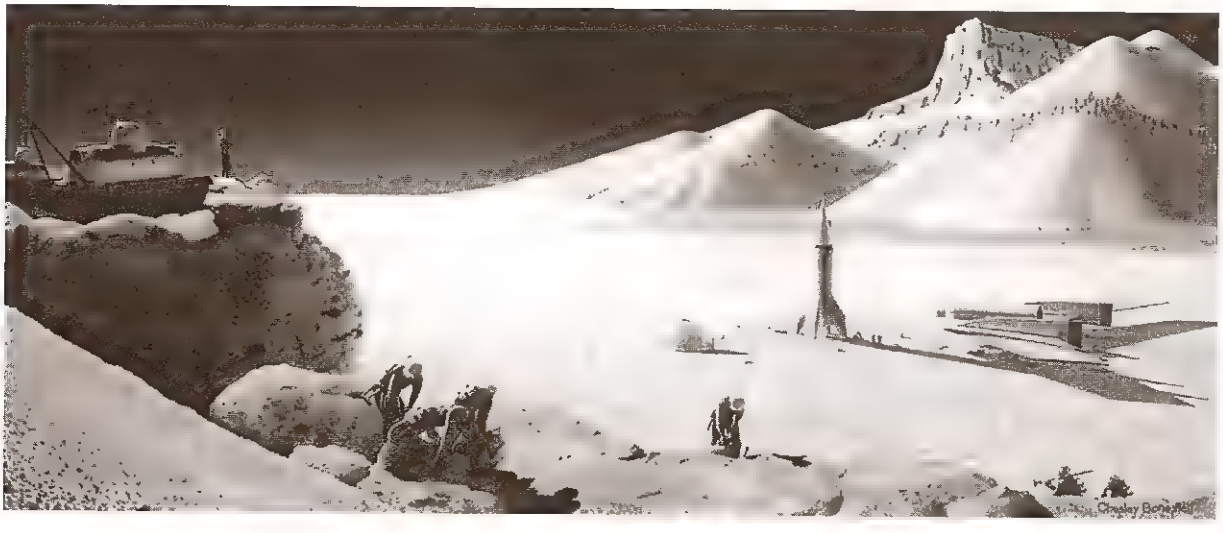
After burning all their family papers, including a map of the United States, the father says "*Come along all of you. Here, Alice. Now I'm going to show you THE MARTIANS!*" They walk along, father carrying his son Robert, crying in his arms. The night sky revealed no sign of Earth, it was like "*it had already set!*" As they reach the canal, father points "*There they are Michael...*" They look down, It sends a thrill chasing through Timothy. "*The Martians were there, all right... In the canal... reflected in the water. Timothy and Michael and Robert and Mum and Dad. The Martians stared back at them for a long silent time, from the rippling water...*"

Above Chesley Bonestell's "Mars Landing" and below "Exploration of Mars."

The Red Planet

The planets have been considered for centuries but at times their orbital precession, in the night sky, conflicted with mathematical predictions. These anomalies were resolved, when the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (in **De Revolutionibus,** 1530) proposed the fantastical idea that the Earth revolves around the Sun. This flew in the face of Catholic ideology, which insisted the Earth was at the centre of the Universe. It would lead to virtual imprisonment (after trial by Inquisition) for its later proponent, the scientist and thinker Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). Christianity would eventually learn to accept this heretical idea. Mars is the fourth planet in our solar system. The others being Mercury, Venus, ourselves, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. It is slightly smaller than Earth, with an adjacent orbit. Mars has two moons, Phobos and Deimos, although these were not discovered until much later. It was astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli (1835 - 1910), who gave us the popular view of the Red Planet, with its notable lines. From observations, he also drew a detailed map of Mars, which included what Schiaparelli called "*canali*" or canals.

Schiaparelli would write of them "*All the vast extent of the continents is furrowed upon every side by a network of numerous lines or fine stripes of a more or less pronounced dark colour, whose aspect is very variable. They traverse the planet for long distances in regular lines that do not at all resemble the winding courses of our streams. Some of the shorter ones do not reach three hundred miles; others extend for many*



thousands, occupying a quarter or even a third of the circumference of the planet ... The canals may intersect among themselves at all possible angles, but by preference they converge towards the small spots to which we have given the name of lakes."

War Of The Worlds

The American born, Percival Lowell would enhance the reputation of these channels with his 1906 treatise, **Mars And Its Canals**. The earlier fictionalisation of H.G. Wells, **War Of The Worlds** (1898), with its invading Martian machines was instrumental in bringing our warlike neighbour into sharp relief. Its retelling, as a faux documentary, radio-broadcast on the 30th October 1938, was novel in unexpected ways. The conceit was constructed by namesake Orson Welles and his Mercury Theater group. It involved the interruption of a music concert to bring you the latest "*news bulletin*" about a "*huge flaming object*," which had dropped on a farm near "*Grovers Mill, New Jersey.*" "*A humped shape is rising out of the pit. I can make out a small beam of light against a mirror. What's that? There's a jet of flame springing from that mirror, and it leaps right at the advancing men. It strikes them head on! Good Lord, they're turning into flame!*" Some skittish members of the American public went wild. For days afterwards, the media was filled with reports of families fleeing their homes and ensuing widespread panic. Orson's coy denial of any wrongdoing, captured on film, suggested he might have had an inkling of the possible outcome. In "*Black Magic on Mars*" (**Superman #62,** 1950), a fictional Welles travels unwittingly by rocket to the planet that had caused him so much trouble. On arrival, he stumbles into an invasion attempt. After the previous scare, when Orson manages to broadcast to Earth, his pleas are ignored. After being saved by Superman, Welles foils the villains by the use of magic (he had a life-long fascination and famously filmed **F For Fake** in 1973), whilst Superman dashes off to destroy the gathering Martian invasion fleet.

Gilberton, as part of their long running **Classics Illustrated** series, would adapt H.G's original vision, with striking cover and art by Lou Cameron (**#124**, January 1955). It had also become a classic movie, in 1953, directed by Byron Haskins, with Gene Barry and Ann Robinson leading Earth's revolt. Among several other contemporary movies dealing with science fiction themes, there was **Invaders From Mars**. In 1962, *Bubbles, Inc.*, brought out a stunning but disturbing Gum-card set, **Mars Attacks**. These showed, in graphic detail, a fictional war between Earth and Mars. The hideous Martians, with their oversized brain like skulls, had been based on the artistry of Wally Wood. The painted illustrations were the work of renowned pulp illustrator Norman Saunders, over the pencilled layouts of Bob Powell. With tongue firmly in cheek, the outrageous premise was restaged as a feature film, by Tim Burton (1996). It came replete with "*Burning Cattle*", "*Destroying A Dog*", "*Burning Flesh*" and other themes, worked in from the original series. There are other recent card sets and comic books, carrying the **Mars Attacks** name. Edgar Rice Burroughs, famed for his ape-man Tarzan, also had several stories based on our planetary neighbour. **The Princess of Mars** second only to **John Carter Of Mars**. Whilst the former referred to "*green men of Mars*," the latter achieved a long if sporadic career in Comics. Yet, a minor revolution took place with the release, in 1956, of an astonishing book about Mars and its potential for actual exploration. It would have the benefit of a series of beautiful and beguiling images.

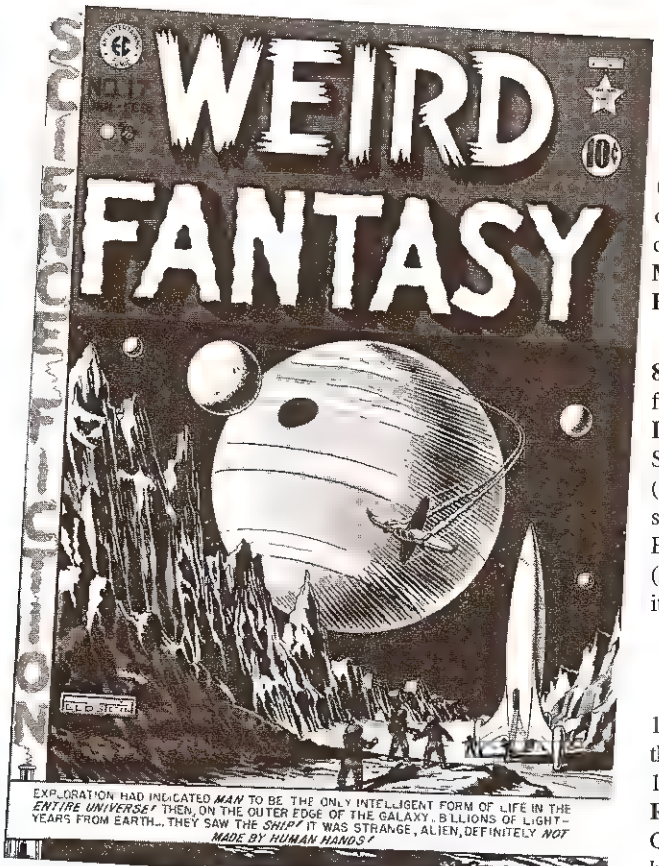
One Small Step For Man...

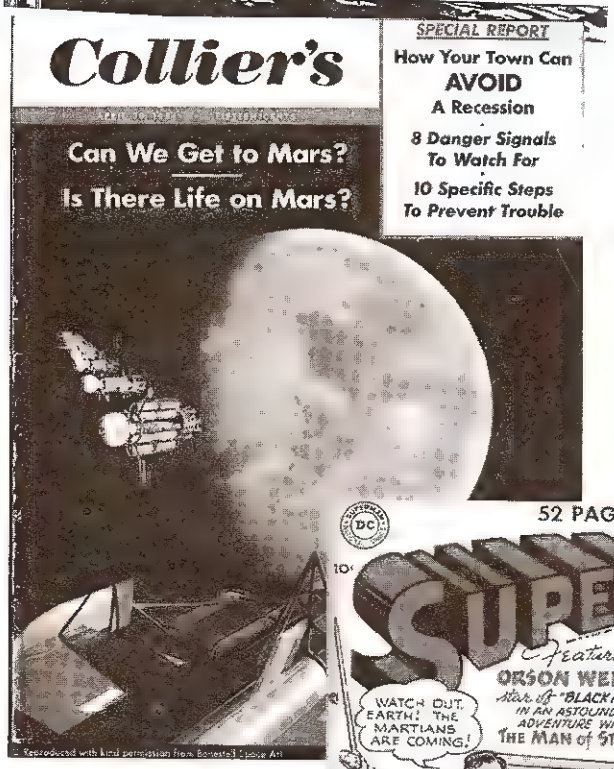
It was Chesley Bonestell (1888 1986) who fleshed out these dry ideas about space, when he began illustrating Earth's Moon and the Planets orbiting our Sun. Such was the fascination and beauty of his visions that they appealed to both scientists and science fiction fans alike. From 1946 onwards, his images appeared on numerous periodicals, such as **Analog, Coronet, Life, The Magazine Of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Mechanics Illustrated** and **Science illustrated**. Two periodicals stand out, **Astounding Science Fiction** and **Collier's Magazine**. Whilst the former used Bonestell's images for the covers, Collier's gave over several glossy, full-colour, pages to his feasible impressions. Among the movies that Bonestell worked on, were **Conquest Of Space, Destination Moon, When Worlds Collide** and **War Of The Worlds** (1950 5). The first three were produced by George Pal. The popularity of **Destination Moon** and **When Worlds Collide** was such that they were adapted as **Fawcett Movie Comics**, with photo covers and several production stills. The former was also adapted briefly in *DC's* **Strange Adventures #1**. In 1956 and 1958, *Charlton* would reprint *Fawcett's* former **Destination Moon** in **Space Adventures #20** and **#24** (1956/ 8).

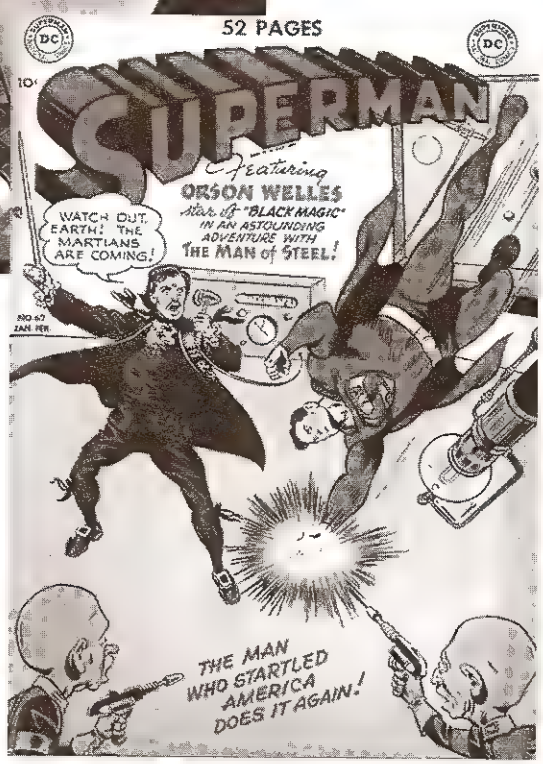
I, Rocket
Visionaries one and all Wernher Von Braun, Willie Ley, Walt Disney and Haber E Heinz

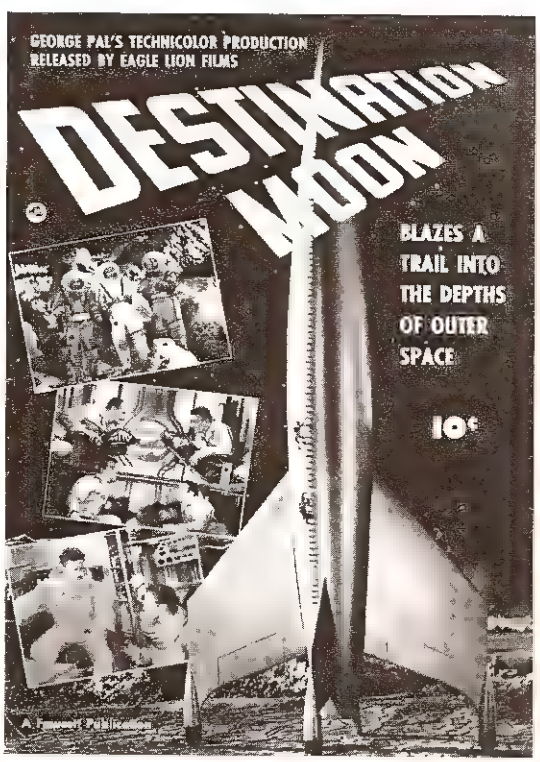
Tomorrowland

Aided by the brilliant former Nazi rocket scientist, Wernher von Braun (1912-1977), author Willie Ley produced two visionary books.


SCIENCE FICTION
WEIRD FANTASY
10¢
EXPLORATION HAD INDICATED MAN TO BE THE ONLY INTELLIGENT FORM OF LIFE IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE! THEN, ON THE OUTER EDGE OF THE GALAXY, BILLIONS OF LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH... THEY SAW THE SHIP! IT WAS STRANGE, ALIEN, DEFINITELY NOT MADE BY HUMAN HANDS!






GEORGE PAL'S TECHNICOLOR PRODUCTION
RELEASED BY EAGLE LION FILMS
DESTINATION MOON
BLAZES A TRAIL INTO THE DEPTHS OF OUTER SPACE
10¢

Ley (1906-1969) was also a rocket scientist and onetime teacher of his collaborator, but had left his homeland in 1934 to settle in America. The first of these books was **Man on the Moon** (1953), followed by **The Exploration Of Mars**. They were aided by the extraordinary visualisations of Chesley Bonestell and were important in the quest for man to leave Earth and explore the universe. This trio would collaborate on other projects too. Von Braun teamed up with Walt Disney and produced a series of animated features (directed by Ward Kimball), to be aired on the *ABC* network. **Man in Space** and **Man And The Moon** were shown during 1955, with **Mars and Beyond** televised in December 1957.

They were turned into comic books, part of the **Dell Four Color** series (**#716, 866** and **954**, 1956-9), a **Dell Giant #27** compilation (1960), plus illustrated books from *L.W. Singer Company* (1959). The realistically staged, 1959 US TV series, **Men Into Space** retained von Braun as Technical Adviser, with Bonestell as Creator Of Space Concepts. Again, *Dell* would adapt three episodes in **Four Color #1083** (March-May 1960). These feature Murphy Anderson's art under a photo cover of the series star, William Lundigan, as Colonel Ed McCauley. Disney's sponsorship of von Braun proved decisive with the American public. Following the foundation of NASA (National Aeronautic and Space Administration) in July 1958, Wernher von Braun as its first Director, was able to achieve his goal of getting men into space.

Weird Fantasy

The earliest science fiction comic was the long running **Planet Comics** (January 1940 to 1953), from the 1920's pulp publisher *Fiction House*. It was a companion to their slightly earlier **Planet Stories** (winter 1939/ 40). Other early examples, from 1940, were **Science Comics** and **Rex Dexter On Mars** from *Victor Fox*, **Hillman's Rocket Comics** (an anthology with s-f covers) and **Superworld Comics** from Hugo Gernsback. The latter featured cover illustrations from Frank R. Paul, renowned for his work in the pulp field, where the genre had thrived since the beginning of the 20th century. Publisher *Ziff-Davis* would stage several science fiction titles in the 1950's, including **Crusaders From Mars** and the wonderfully named **Lars Of Mars**. The popular serial characters Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon would also feature in various titles. Most of these were space operas, with little or no scientific content.

Entertaining Comics transformed the genre in 1950, when they pioneered the realism missing from these science fiction titles, with **Weird Science** and **Weird Fantasy**. This was due to the enthusiasm with which owner and publisher William M. Gaines (1922-1992), a self-confessed avid reader, had devoured numerous novels and short stories in the rapidly expanding and inventive science fiction genre. The plot devices from these yarns were converted into springboards, which Gaines would "*sell*" to Al Feldstein. The latter would go off and lay out the texts directly onto the art boards, to the required number of pages. These were presented to the artist for illustrating and return. *EC's* artists were a talented bunch, hand picked by Bill and Al, as Gaines and Feldstein would often style themselves.

The Silent Towns

By using the latest understanding and ideas, *EC's* stories were revolutionary. Soon edited by the prolific Al Feldstein (1925 -), these comics were pragmatic. They were taken up with the technology and means of surviving in space. The rocket was often home and featured in several stories. Witness the adaptation of Ray Bradbury's adaptation "*I, Rocket,*" with Feldstein cover (**Weird Fantasy #20**, 1953). Their interior dials and clutter, particularly from Wally Wood, emphasise this complexity. If there were monsters, then there were also air-locks, space suits and disastrous penalties for the unwary traveller in space. More often, it was man or his machines that failed, not the tentacled alien. Even though his covers bore the influence and epic qualities of Chesley Bonestell, none more so than **Weird Fantasy #11** and **#13** (the atomic devastation of Manhattan and Mars seen from one of it's Moons), they were always atmospheric and frequently beautiful. Feldstein remains the greatest exponent of the science fiction comic book cover, to this day.

The covert lifting of plots from the best writers of the day harmed the stories not one bit. The discovery by Ray Bradbury that "*Home To Stay*," **Weird Science #13** (1953) was a reworking of "*Rocket Man*" and "*Kaleidoscope*" has been extensively covered, nowhere better than in Jerry Weist's **Bradbury, An Illustrated Life**. It is recommended for all aficionados of this wonderful writer and EC Fan-Addicts alike. After the discovery, both Gaines and Bradbury were happy for the relationship to continue on a remunerative basis. A slight hiccup occurred when the author asked that his name be removed, due to the mounting disapproval of American comics, in the popular media. Bradbury's stories continued but now uncredited on the covers. Bill and Al created six science fiction stories with a Martian title. Others like "*The Million Year Picnic*" (**Weird Fantasy #19**, May' June 1953, see opening chapter), "*The Long Years*" and "*The Silent Towns*" all adapted from Bradbury, featured Mars as the setting. Although Bradbury has rightly garnered much praise in relation to his adaptations by EC, EandO (Earl and Otto) Binder's *Adam Link*, the robot from Mars also deserves praise. These stories featured in **Weird Science Fantasy #24** and **#27-9**, after EC's formative titles were combined. There were further appearances of the robot teacher in early editions of **Creepy**, between **#2** and **#15** (Warren, 1965-7), plus Bill Spicer's fanzine **Graphic Story Magazine #13** (Spring 1971).

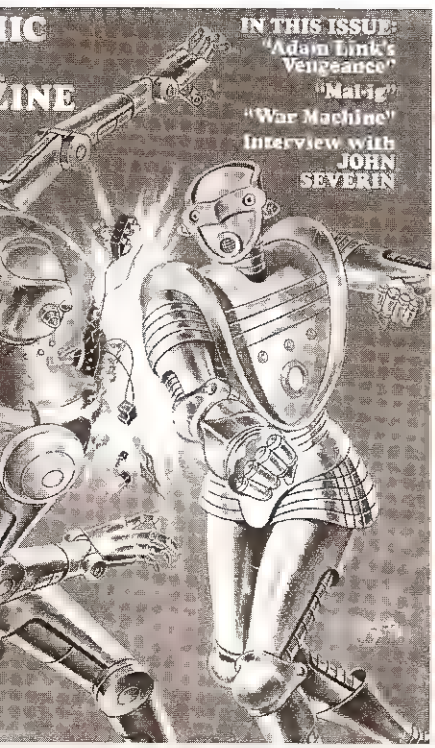
King Of The Grey Spaces

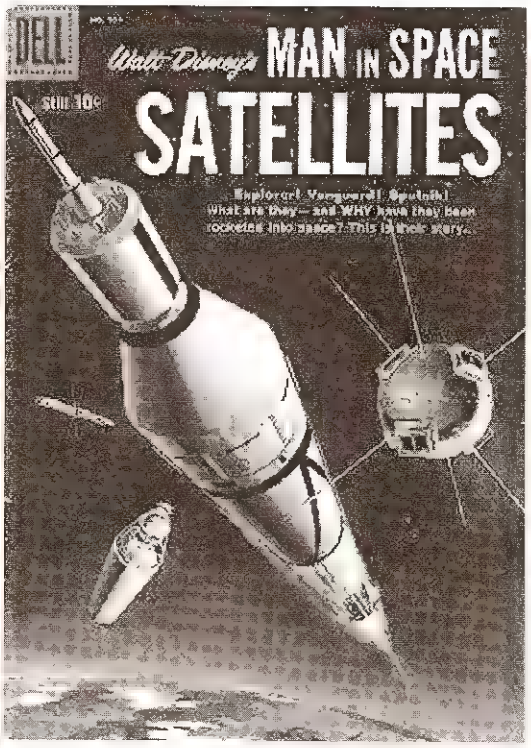
Ray Bradbury (1920) has written extensively within the horror, mystery and science fiction genres. He began with short stories, in 1943. **Dark Carnival**, his first anthology was published in 1947. Bradbury's reputation was assured with the appearance of its sibling, **The Martian Chronicles** (1950). There have been numerous other collections and novels, since and he is rightly regarded as one of the giants of the genre. His stories are intricate, sometimes whimsical and constructed like a puzzle. Although other authors are associated with comic books, outside of Tarzan creator Edgar Rice Burroughs, none more so than Ray Bradbury. After the experiment with EC, his stories were ignored by the comic books. However, two volumes of his *EC* originals appeared in paperback, from *Ballentine Books* (1965/ 6). It began in 1954, with **Mad Reader**, several other reprint anthologies followed. Non-humour stories were featured in 1964, with **Tales Of The Incredible**, **Vault Of Horror** and **Tales From The Crypt**. Following on, were **Tomorrow Midnight** and **The Autumn People**. The former, a compilation of Ray's horror adaptations, whilst the latter showcased his science fiction.

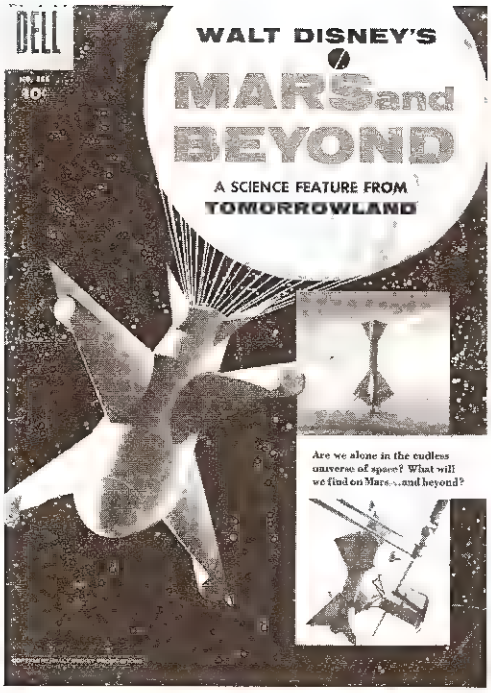
Publisher Russ Cochran was instrumental in increasing awareness of *EC* and getting their stories reprinted. From 1971, he featured Bradbury's "*Touch and Go*", "*The Flying Machine*", "*Mars Is Heaven*" and "*A Sound Of Thunder*" in his beautifully produced, black and white, **EC Portfolios #1-3** and **5**. *The Nostalgia Press* hardcover, **Horror Comics From The 1950's** (1971) avoided Bradbury, no doubt guided by Gaines who controlled the reprinting of his old stories. However, *The East Coast Comix Company* reprint series, from Ron Barlow and Bruce Hershenson, would reprint the unofficial adaptation, "Home To Stay," in the 1973 **EC Classic Reprint #2**. Cochran also began an oversize series called **EC Classics** and again his fondness for the author was evident, with appearances in issues **#5** and **#8** (1986), of "*There Will Come Soft Rains*" plus "*Touch and Go.*" Finally, Cochran's **EC Library** and *EC reprint* series would see all stories, including Bradbury's, reprinted. The former is the renowned, black and white, multi volume series with slipcases. The latter, is the entire *New Trend, New Direction* and most of the *Pre-Trend*, as affordable four-colour comics. *Topps, Inc.* (the parent company of *Bubbles, Inc.*) also produced a series of **Ray Bradbury Comics**, plus some **Special Editions**. These featured adaptations by such talents as Richard Corben, P Craig Russell and Dave Gibbons, alongside EC's earlier adaptations. They were based upon the original hardcover series, **Ray Bradbury Chronicles** (*Nantier, Beall, Minoustchine,* 1992), conceived by *Byron Preiss*. They have remained in print, in one form or another, to this day.

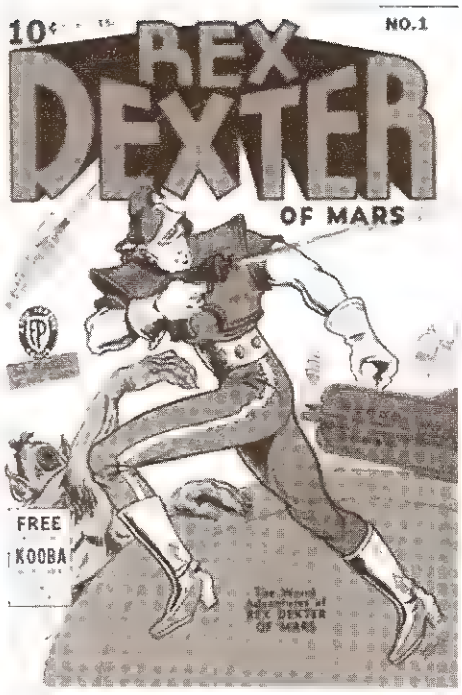
Weird Science

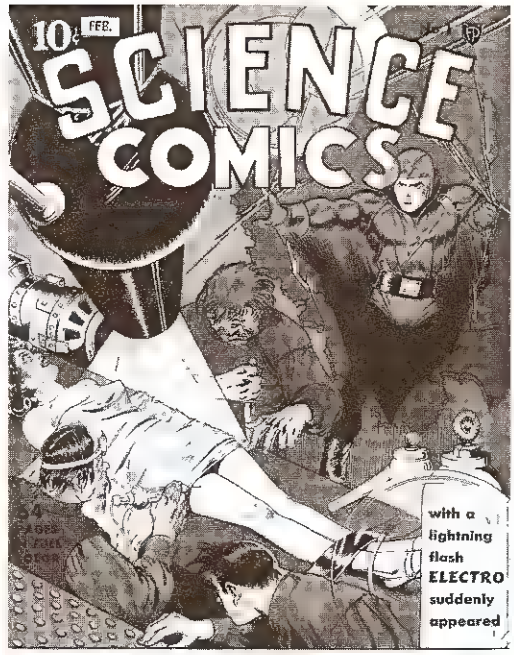
Featuring a Lunar astronaut cover, the Canadian **Science Comics #1**(*Export Publishing Enterprises Ltd*, March 1951) also journeyed into






DELL
WALT DISNEY'S
MARS and BEYOND
A SCIENCE FEATURE FROM TOMORROWLAND
Are we alone in the endless universe of space? What will we find on Mars... and beyond?





THE EAGLE • COSMIC CARSON • PERISPHERE PAYNE

From 1957 Dell's Mars and Beyond sits side by side two classic images from the Golden Age, Fox's Rex Dexter of Mars #1 and Science Comics premier from 1940.

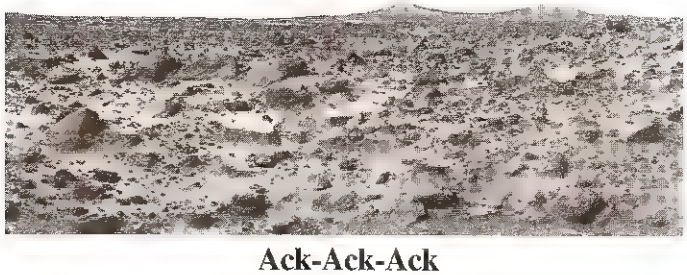
space. The US *Gilberton*, **Classics Illustrated Special Issue #159** (1961) invited it's readers "*To The Stars*." Companion title, **World Around Us #5** (1959) featured "*The Illustrated Story Of Space*." It was reprinted in the UK (by *Thorpe and Porter*) as **World Illustrated #505** but with the cover image mirrored. After the demise of the American series, UK editions continued, using unpublished material. **World Illustrated #530**, "*Life Beyond The Earth*" (c1963) has a striking view of Mars for its cover, distinctly in the style of Bonestell. Earlier, the youthful *Bob Brand* and **His Trouble Shooters** steal a rocket from under the Russian's noses and take it to the Moon (**Man Comics #27**, Atlas, 1953). *A.C. Gilbert & Co.*, manufactured educational toys, science and chemistry sets, microscopes and *Lionel Trains*. There were at least two, small sized, science giveaways (5 1/8" x 7 1/8", 130 x 182mm) and **Adventures In Science** (1958) features *Bud Adams*, whose life is transformed whilst disinterestedly visiting *Gilbert's* store with his father.

After looking through a telescope, "*Hey it's getting bigger! It's practically on top of me! WH- WHAT'S HAPPENING!*" Next thing, he is on the Moon being educated about how interesting science is, by the snappily dressed *Mr. Science*. It is too cold for *Bud* (not to mention the lack of space suit) so the remainder of the adventure continues back on Earth. It has attractive art and cover by Curt Schaffenberger. *General Electric* also released a series of educational giveaways. One of the last was the 1959 **Our Place In Space** (part of their *Adventures In Science Series*). As rendered by George Roussos, series hero *Johnny Powers* and friend Bill learn about space from older brother Ed. There are other giveaway comics to be located, including **Outer Space** (*Richfield Oil*, 1953), **Triumph Over Space** (*Kaiser-Fraser*, 1951, as brilliant Martian scientist *Kay* journeys home) and **Tug and Terry's Adventures In Space** (*Chicken Of The Sea Tuna*, 1958). *Topps*, Inc also produced two interesting card series. The first being **Space Cards** (1957), the second **Astronauts** from 1963. The latter featured photographs of genuine US astronauts, with three D images on the backs, for which the 5c gum-packs supplied miniature anaglyptic viewers. The **Space** series featured painted illustrations, with several later cards reworking Bonestell's deep-space images. It proved so popular, it was reprinted twice, once as **Target: Moon**, 1958. Rival Bowman also produced a great card set, with **Jets, Rockets, Spacemen** (1951). Luckily, it was reprinted in 1981 and is easy to obtain.

...One Giant Leap For Mankind

NASA landed a man on the Moon, on 20th July 1969. US President Robert F. Kennedy had announced America's intention, in September 1962. Neil Armstrong was accorded the signal honour of being the first to set foot there. Like the Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, his name will live on, wherever men look up at the stars and wonder. Armstrong's short commentary "*That's One Small Step for (a) man...,*" as he stepped onto the surface, "*...one giant leap for mankind*" has also achieved immortality.

Man has observed Mars more closely, since 1964. This is also by the American based *NASA*, despite numerous attempts since 1960, by the USSR. The epic flight and landing on Mars, on the 20th July 1976, by the *Viking 1* lander (part of the twin craft, *Viking* Mission) was the culmination. It made history, when it became the first man-made object to land safely on another Planet. Scientists still predict that life could be found on Mars, maybe buried into the surface to escape the sub-zero temperatures and unrelenting climate. Whether it will be green, bug-eyed, have tentacles or hideous oversized external brains, for now, remains unknown.

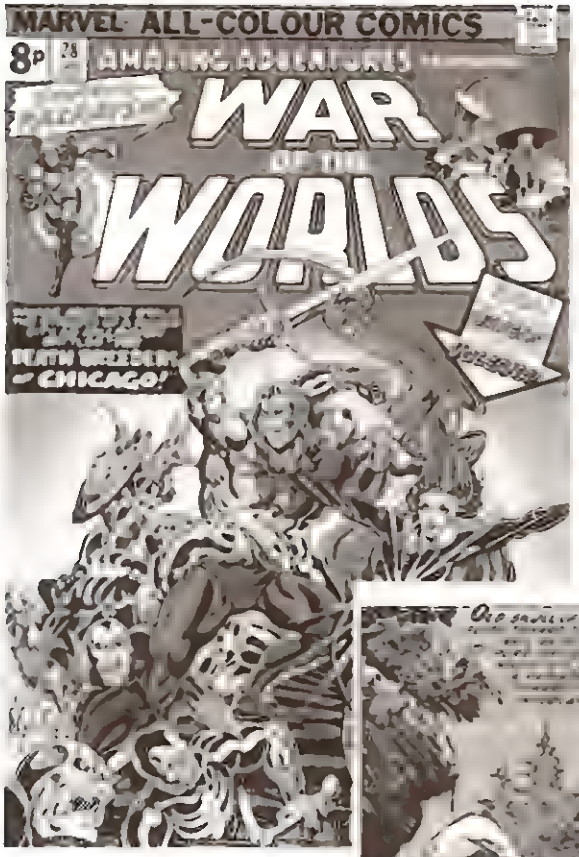


Ack-Ack-Ack

An Interview with P. Craig Russell

by Peter Normanton

February 2005



When you first came into comics was there a feeling you had something new to add?

I had a young man's blind belief that anything is possible and that I would do great things...despite all the evidence to the contrary.

I recently learned you came up with the idea for the first Dr Strange Annual before you worked for Marvel. How much did the final version differ from your original concept?

I came up with the idea when, after my first short year at Marvel, I took a leave of absence to finish college. Actually I was going to school and drawing Ant Man for a while. Then I quit Marvel to concentrate on finishing school and that's when I began working on Dr. Strange entirely for my own amusement. I worked on it in Cincinnati where I was going to school, then took it to New York and sold it to Marvel. The final version, completed three years later as a 35-page story differed significantly from my original 60 page plan. It's a little involved to go into now but it would have ended with a mad wedding scene. Maybe someday.

I think we all look forward to seeing it. The nature of the Dr Strange story line would have suited your artwork perfectly. Was Steve Ditko ever an influence?

I was mad for Ditko's work and certainly his visual conception of the character was influential and his ability to convey other spiritual/occult dimensions in the most realistic way imaginable set the bar high for

Hello Craig and thanks for being so kind as to take time out to do this interview. Could you tell us anything about your early comic book reading and what impression these comics had on you?

Pretty much the same as any other comics reading kid of my era, I'd imagine. Walt Disney comics and Casper, and Little Lulu, etc. as a little kid. Then on to Archie in junior high school and then the Marvel explosion in the mid-60's. Two giant issues of Spirit reprints from Harvey comics made an indelible impression and then the Warren comic magazines, Creepy and Eerie with their stellar array of artists in their early issues, all in the mid 60's. Freshman year in col lege('69) and my first issue of Zap comics. Holy cow!

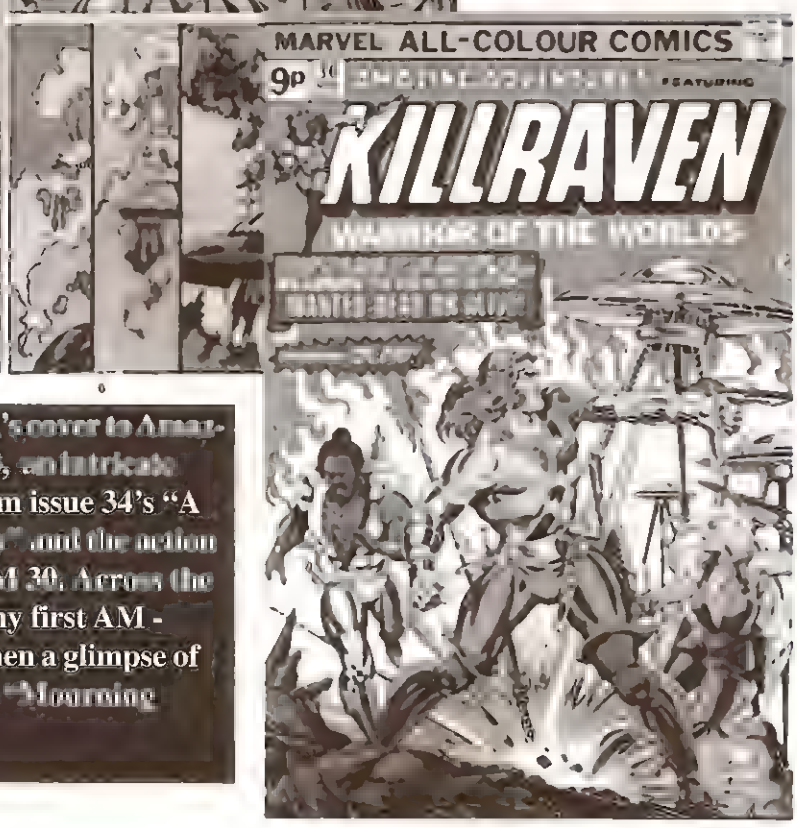
I can imagine Zap would have had that effect on many young college readers. At what stage did you begin to feel art was a potential career?

When Dan Adkins told me that if I would drop out of art school and work in his studio he would get me into Marvel comics.

Did you ever have an interest or become involved with comic book fan projects in your early days?

Nothing much to speak of. When I began working for Marvel I had done maybe two dozen comics pages at the most.

DID YOU
I'D RATHER HAVE KILLRAVEN & THE OTHERS BACK BEFORE I ASK HIS PLAN TO GAIN PRO-
WE HAVE SEVERED OUR FORCES
OLD SKULL, HE THINKS
IMPORTANT
GOOD AND YOU?
HEAR?



From the top Craig's cover to Amazing Adventures #28, an intricate panel sequence from issue 34's "A Death in the Family" and the action packed cover to AM 30. Across the page the cover to my first AM - Killraven 31 and then a glimpse of the poetry that was "Mourning Pity"

anyone attempting to do the character. Past that, I was more influenced by the Symbolist painters of the late 19th century and book illustration of the early 20th. Also Steranko, Windsor Smith, and Wrightson.

There are times in Killraven and both the Steranko and Windsor-Smith influence can be seen. How did the chance to work on Killraven come about?

The book was simply offered to me. At that time I was less concerned with working on a specific title than I was with having an opportunity to prove I could do a book that was worth looking at. I was very competitive but I think in a good way. I got as big a kick out of seeing my peers do good work as I got from doing the thing itself.

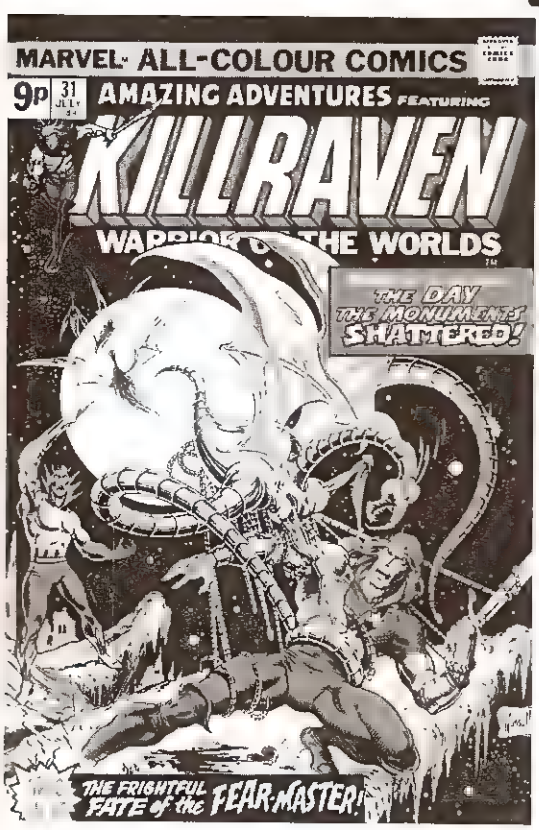
Your style was quite different to anything that had gone before with this series. Did the fact this was a struggling title allow you to be experimental and move away from what had gone before?

Marvel was going through a real transition period at the time. They were expanding their line in a variety of directions at the same time as they were experiencing a rapid turnover in editors. This made for a nicely loose atmosphere. Also, Killraven was one of those non-flagship titles and so escaped the corporate scrutiny. I was much more interested in doing a title like KR than in working on Spiderman, for instance.

With this vision of Killraven's world being so different to your predecessors what can of reception did it get from your fellow staffers at Marvel and the fans? Your rendition was unusually subtle than many of your contemporaries if not visually poetic.

I got great support from everyone there. It was

INTERIM II:
METAMORPHOSIS
LOOK AT IT OUT THERE IN THE SUN SPLASHED TREES, YOU SEE IT, YOU'VE SEEN IT BEFORE, THOUGH YOU HAVE NEVER REALLY SEEN IT, YOU ACKNOWLEDGE ITS EXISTENCE AND RELUCTANTLY GRANT IT ITS BEAUTY, AND PRETEND TO CARE THAT YOU KNOW IT IS THERE, RATHER BUTTERFLIES THAN CATERPILLARS; BANISH THE CATERPILLARS,
REPLACE THEM WITH DELICATE BUTTERFLIES AND DELUDE YOURSELF INTO BELIEVING YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO FACE IT.



Don who had all the battles to fight over storylines. By the time I was given a synopsis most of the fights, though not all, were over. Also, my style was evolving so fast, literally from issue to issue, and people seemed to enjoy seeing the changes. From film, comics, illustration, fine art, I was absorbing like a sponge and sending it right out again. It sometimes made for a schizophrenic look but I was having fun.

When you look at these issues one after another you can see how your style was developing. While Don is recognised as the writer on the series did you ever become involved with the story line or character development?

No. The story was all Don's. The visual 'telling' of the story was mine. Don certainly had ideas and suggestions along the way but we worked with the synopsis method, not a panel by panel script so my initial contribution was to visually flesh out the story, pacing, body language, etc., before Don then did the finished script.

How did you feel when this series was finally cancelled?

I was ready to move on. It was a great experience, just what I needed at that early point in my career, to work with a writer so completely dedicated to producing the best work we possibly could. It was exactly what I was looking for. But at that young of an age I was pretty undisciplined and the two years of deadlines was a real hassle. So I was ready to work on single story projects for a while.

Does any issue of this series in particular stand out, or anything else at

Marvel come to think of it?

I think the "*A Death In the Family*" issue was the most consistent in the (relative) quality of the artwork and its integration with the script. Don did it almost completely without word balloons, prose only, and that worked well with the art. It would have had no balloons at all but really clueless editorial interference insisted we them so they're inte- with the drawings.

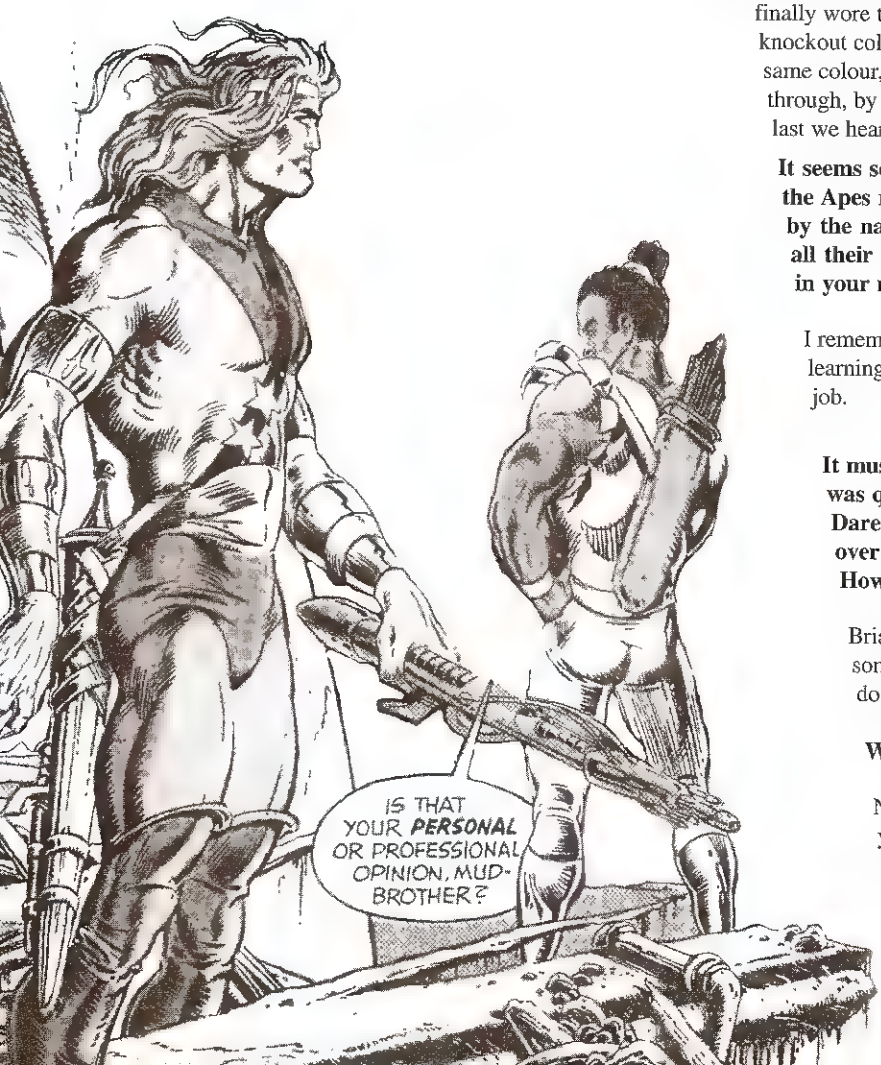
have a couple pages worth in the beginning. Another one of Don's battles that resulted in artistic compromise. Nevertheless, I think the issue, overall, is our best.

Did you have any objections to returning to Killraven for the one-off graphic novel?

No, I looked forward to it. It wasn't written to be the final chapter in the saga, just a furthering of the story to be serialized in Epic magazine but which ended up as a single graphic 'novel'. What I liked best about the experience was asking Don for a complete script before I started this time. That way I could design his sometimes dense script into the artwork so that script and art could work together without the feeling of a heave script being plastered over the art. I have no problem with a lot of words as long as I can work with grated into and happily compatible

Don McGregor has talked about his creative differences with Marvel over Killraven and Panther's Rage. Did you ever feel you were at all compromised by the house style or editorial policy?

As I mentioned earlier I had little interference with my drawing. It was Don who fought the fights. They objected to the interracial kiss and when we finally wore them down on that they said it needed to be coloured as a knockout colour. In other words, both characters coloured all of the same colour, as in a blue shadow. We didn't, it somehow went through, by acquiescence or accident I don't know, and that was the last we heard of it.



It seems so petty. Can you recall working on Marvel's Planet of the Apes magazine? A fellow editor friend of mine runs a 'zine by the name of Simian Scrolls which celebrates the Apes in all their shapes and sizes and he can recall an image signed in your name possibly from an early phase at Marvel.

I remember inking a short story by Ed Hannigan. I was just learning how to ink other artists and I'm afraid I did a wretched job.

It must have been early days for you but more recently I was quite surprised to see you turn up in issue 65 of Daredevil. Daredevil has become a very gritty comic book over the last few years, almost at odds with your style. How did this come about?

Brian Bendis approached me. He's both a friend and someone whose work I admire a great deal. So I was glad to do it.

Will we be seeing this kind of thing again?

Not in the immediate future, though projects lined up a year or so in advance have been known to fall through at the last minute, so you never know.

I think there are many Daredevil fans who will welcome you back. Did companies' such as First,

Eclipse and Star Reach offer you more freedom as a creator? For a reader whose interests lay outside costumed superheroes these publishers provided a fascinating alternative.

They offered way more freedom. Where else could I find a publisher that would allow me to adapt plays by Maurice Maeterlink or operas by Strauss or Wagner. In the last decade publishers like NBM and Dark Horse have provided a creative home for me and those out of the mainstream projects I love to do.

When you became involved with Elric, was this merely an assignment or was there a genuine interest in Michael Moorcock's tortured hero?

I had never read Moorcock before I was offered Elric though people had told me over the years that it was the sort of thing I was suited for. It was just by happenstance that I never came across the books. They simply weren't available in my smalltown outlets in the 60's as REH and Lovecraft were.

Did Michael Moorcock ever comment on your work?

I'm not certain.

How did you feel about becoming involved with some of the darker horror material in the 1990s? I am thinking of the work you produced on Poe's "House of Usher" and Lovecraft's "From Beyond."

I jumped at the chance to do a Lovecraft story. I devoured that stuff as a teenager so it was part nostalgic impulse to return to it as a grownup artist and contribute my 'take' on it. The same with doing Bradbury's Golden Apples of the Sun' and my just completed Conan story The Jewels of Gwahlur. I grew up reading this stuff so I guess there's a little bit of the lingering fan in me that's tickled to be able to make a contribution.

Lovecraft's darkly imaginative writings have great a appeal for both myself and many of FTT's readers, but his vision seems so dark compared to so much of your work. Do you ever become involved with stories that hold no interest? After all we all have to put a roof over our head.

I've been able to channel most of my 'bread and butter' work into inking other artists. Pays well, goes fast. Robin 3000 (originally Tom Swift 3000) was a story that seemed like a fun idea when I started but on rereading it, it seems pretty pointless and embarrassing.

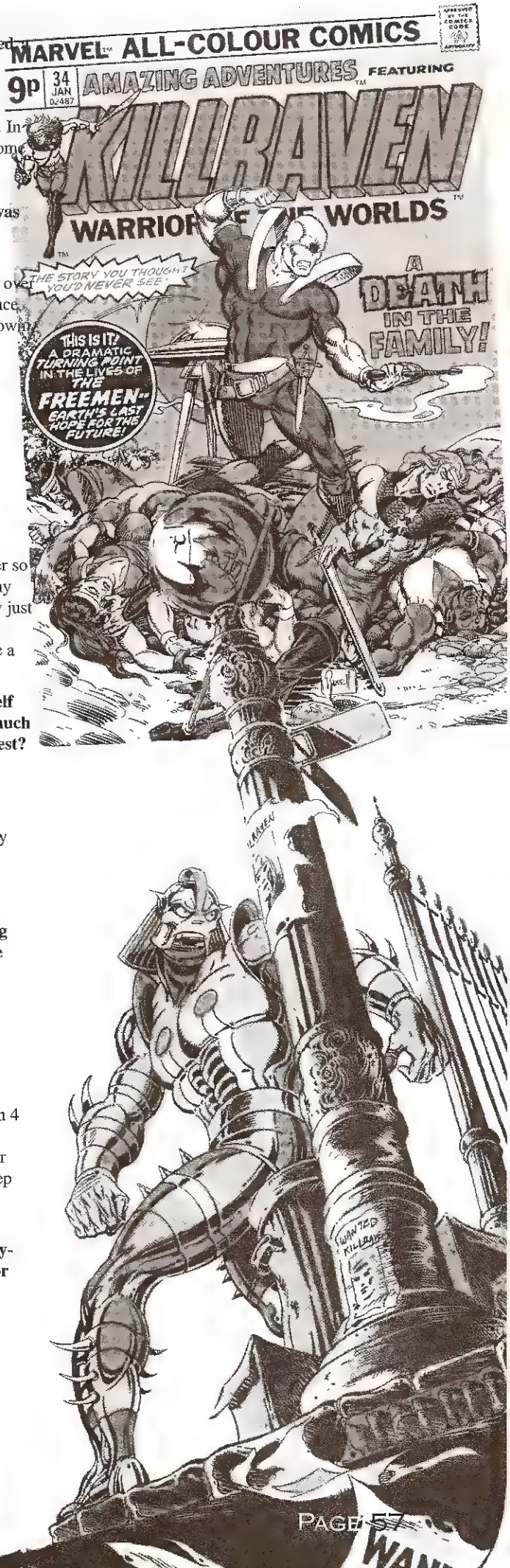
I suppose this follows on from the dread of a project of this nature seeming pointless, has there ever been a time when you have felt comic books to be limiting and felt the need to move into fine art, or film and theatre?

No.

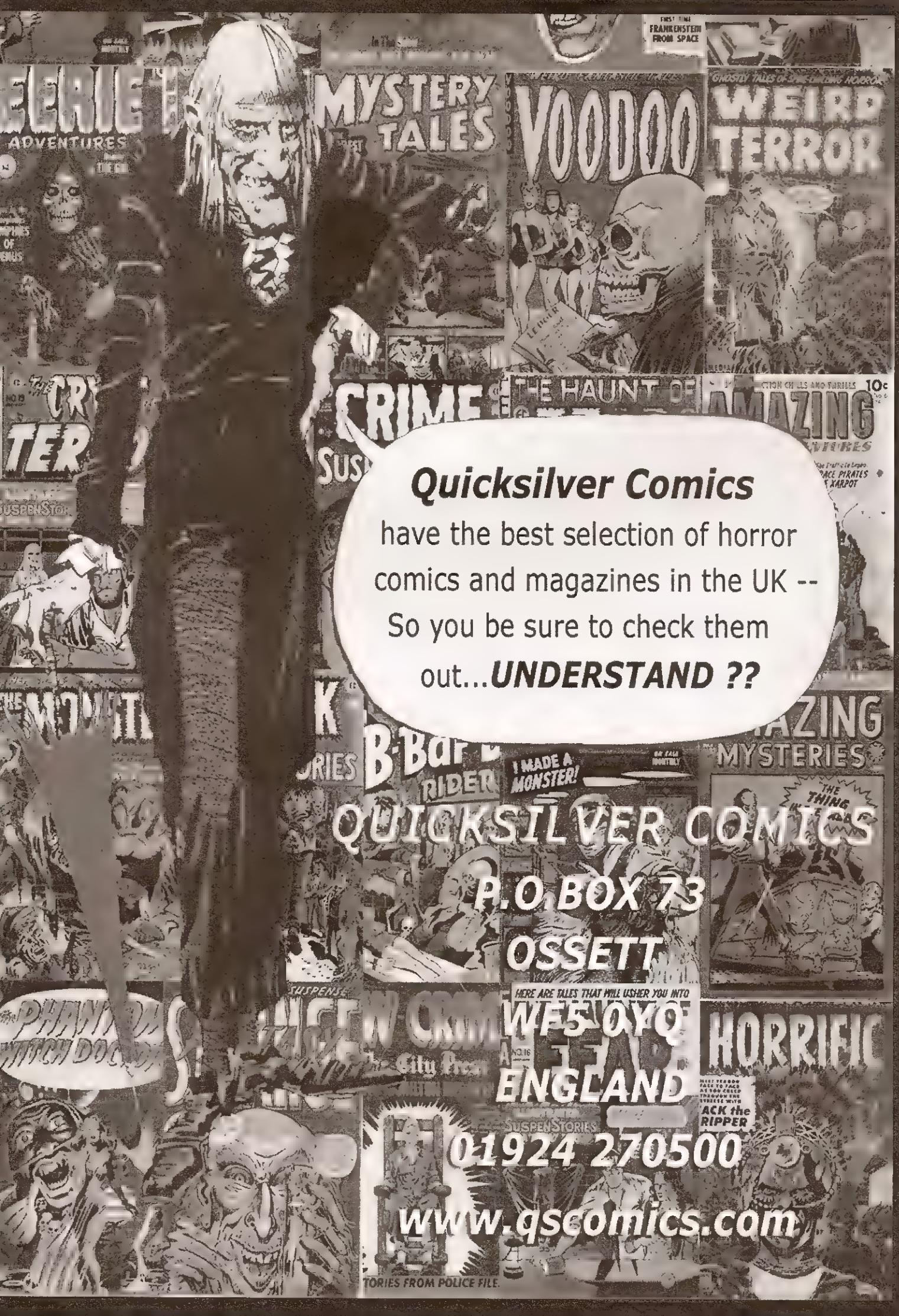
What of the future, what projects have you got lined up?

I still have two more Oscar Wilde fairytales to adapt. (I've already done 7 of 9 in 4 completed volumes for NBM...god bless'em.) And then there's a 200 page Neil Gaiman project that I'm supposed to begin any day now but I'm still waiting for contracts and as I said before, things can and do fall apart at the last minute. Keep your fingers crossed for me.

I know we will all be keeping our fingers crossed for you. Thanks for everything you have given us over the last three decades and all the very best for your future projects.



The covers to Amazing Adventures #32 and Elric #1 show Craig at very different stages in his career. Pacific's Elric allowed him a considerable degree of freedom which was at times seen in AM' 34s memorable "A Death in the Family".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The Miller's Tale

(Concluding Our) Journey Back To The Yawn Of Time With The Doctor and his Mutinous Crew!

by Frank 'Davros' Moder and P.R. 'Doc' Garriock, Additional Research by Michael 'Magpie' Harvey

(The story so far, as told exclusively in the last issue of **From The Tomb**. Your favourite retro comic book nostalgia magazine: -

Around 1940, from their warehouse headquarters in Hackney Road, London, the *Miller* family began producing comic books for UK consumption. This was during the dark days of World War II (1939-45). After various experiments, they settled on reprinting the hugely successful **Captain Marvel** family titles, plus numerous western movie-hero titles, from US publishing giant *Fawcett Publications, Inc.* After the dissolution of *Fawcett* (1954), *Miller* reprinted a host of titles from *Charlton, Atlas, Farrell* & others. By the late 1950's, the company had become so successful that father Len was driving a Rolls Royce, his wife Florrie being chauffeured around in an Austin Princess.)

1d
THE MONSTER OF FRANKENSTEIN
No 5
BIG 68 PAGES DONT TAKE LESS
MORE NEW THRILLS AND CHILLS WITH THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS HORROR CHARACTER!
A DEMENTED SCULPTOR DECIDES TO MAKE A LIFE-SIZE STATUE BY ENCASING THE MONSTER IN MOLTEN BRONZE.

The Captain America of the 1950s swings into action to put pay to the Commies and Frankenstein runs amok at the start of his fifth issue. Britain was never going to be the same!

...Like Son!

Arnold Louis Miller was born on 22nd October 1922, to parents Leonard and Florence Miller. During the war, he served in the Royal Air Force (RAF). Whilst early *L. Miller and Son* publications are thought to have appeared in 1940, the first recorded *Arnold Book Co. (ABC)* edition is 1947. This was **Golden Arrow #6**, which used the *Miller* triangle, suitably altered. (Other issues of this former *Fawcett* bowman favoured the *Miller* imprint.) Arnold would have been about 23 or 24 years old. This may be when the company was set up, in the immediate post war period, with Arnold's war service out of the way. Until 1950, *ABC* produced few comic books. What exist, were mainly the crime type, which Arnold was keen to publish. Father, Len wanted nothing to do with them. The address given for *ABC*, until early 1954, was either the families' or 16 The Forum, High Street, Edgware. Arnold was also the liaison between the *Miller* group and Michael Anglo's *Gower Studios.* This co-operation led to the short-lived boom in science fiction and homegrown titles, plus the hugely successful **Marvelman** and **Young Marvelman** editions, which thrived until 1963. In his book, **Nostalgia: Spotlight On The Fifties**, Anglo describes Arnold Miller as *"Ex-R.A.F., physically tough, shrewd, scrupulously fair and honest in his dealings."*

The notorious 28-page *ABC* editions of **Down With Crime #50-56** *(Fawcett* reprints) caused much consternation in the popular press, as the UK anti-comics campaign gathered momentum (1953-5). This would eventually lead to their prohibition, via an Act of Parliament, 1955.

At the top of the page the Miller edition of Fawcett Movie Comic and next to it Space Adventures 2 starring the Blue Beetle. Miller's version of Action Comics 1 shouldn't be confused with anything associated with DC. With it's Frazetta cover it is still a worthy find!

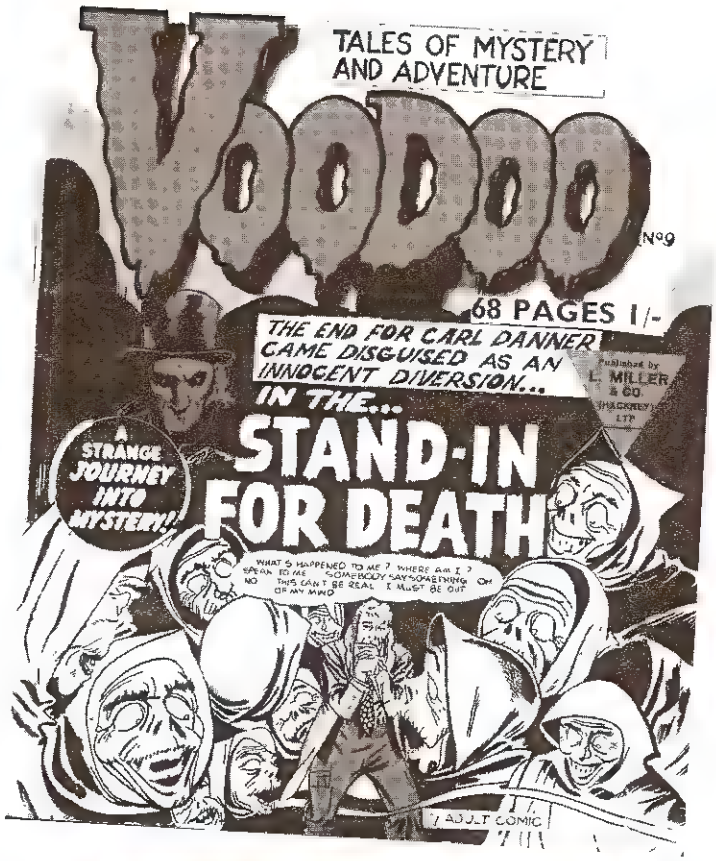
A reading of Martin Barker's **A Haunt Of Fears** (1984) will reveal that the *Arnold* editions were amongst the most contentious UK Comics of their time. Whilst the former was produced and distributed by the *Miller* group, the remainder were a result of co-operation between Arnold's *ABC* and *Thorpe and Porter (T&P)*. The latter had produced some early horror and science fiction editions of their own (**Comics To Hold You Spellbound, Out Of This World, Eerie Comics, Strange Worlds**, etc). The collaborative result was **Frankenstein**, a five issue series, of which *ABC's* name appeared on the latter issues. The same is true for issues **#9-16** of **Black Magic**, plus **Black Magic Album**, which *ABC* inherited. *ABC* also produced **Ghostly Weird Comics**, **Startling Terror Tales** and the three known *EC* reprints, **Tales From The Crypt #1** and **#2**, plus **Haunt Of Fear #1**. The fabled **Vault Of Horror (#1)** will doubtless prove an *ABC* edition, should it exist!

The Ties That Bind

These 68 page *ABC* editions mark a shift in policy, in that they were distributed by *T&P*, after production by their subsidiary, *Jenson Books*. After a brief experiment with *Comyns Ltd.*, 139 Borough High St., London, S.E.1, Arnold also switched the distribution of his 28 page **Space Comics** to *T&P*. The new *ABC* address was 2 Lower James Street, in fashionable London, W.1. Arnold's association with *Gower* and possibly the family group seems to have ended with the last issue of **Space Comics #81**, circa May-54. The split from the father's company was probably acrimonious and would contribute to its change, in 1958, to *L. Miller and Co. Arnold Book Co* editions continued to be produced and distributed by *T&P*, with **Adventures Into Unknown, Forbidden Worlds, Justice Traps The Guilty**, plus the romantic trio **Young Brides, Young Loves** and **Young Romances**. Printed by *Love and Malcolmson Ltd.*, of London and Redhill, Surrey, these originated from the US companies *American Comics Group (ACG)* and *Prize Comics*. All extant titles would transfer to *T&P* or its subsidiaries, during 1958/ 9, marking the end of Arnold Miller's comic publishing career. However, by then he was more interested in the film business.

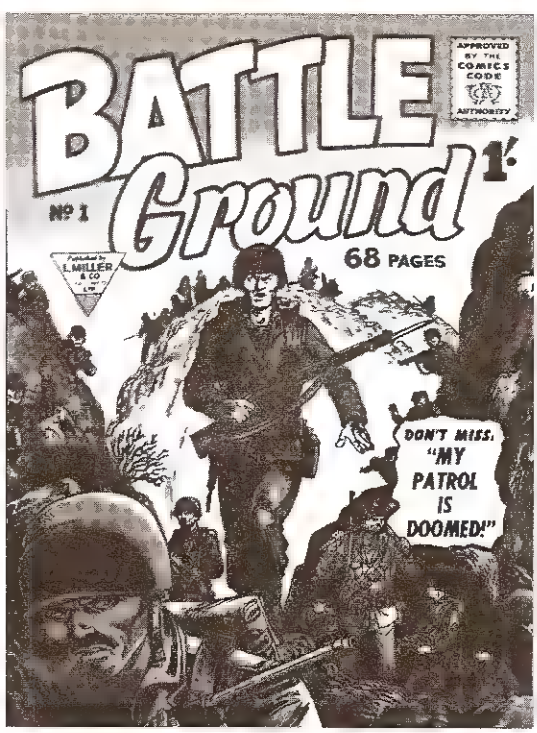
As Easy As A-B-C

In 1950, the first issue of **ABC Film Review** appeared, with a 3d price tag. The magazine was a new venture from the *ABC (Associated British Cinemas)* theatre chain, founded in 1928. Another innovation was the start of *"Saturday Morning Pictures"* for children, in the August. The new magazine carried the trademark fanfare triangle,


TALES OF MYSTERY AND ADVENTURE
VOODOO
No 9
68 PAGES 1/-
THE END FOR CARL DANNER CAME DISGUISED AS AN INNOCENT DIVERSION...
IN THE...
STAND-IN FOR DEATH
A STRANGE JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY!!
Published by L. MILLER & CO. (SHACKLEY) LTD
ADULT COMIC

associated with the cinema group, but it is thought that Arnold Miller was involved with the magazine in some way. There was definitely an appearance during 1954 of *Captain Valiant*, *Arnold Book's* **Space Comics'** hero. Several issues of the latter offered free *ABC* theatre tickets, as prizes. An earlier issue of **ABC Film Review** (October 1952) featured **Eagle Comics'** *Dan Dare, Pilot Of The Future,* in an all-new one page black and white strip. The confusion over the various *ABC's* would be increased when *Associated Broadcasting Company (ABC)* appeared briefly as an independent television company, before it's name was changed to *ATV (Associated TeleVision Ltd).* **ABC Film Review** expired in 1972, when its name was shortened to **Film Review**.

The next appearance of Arnold Miller is as a producer, director and writer for UK based films. These include such minor classics as the 1968 duo, **The Blood Beast Terror** (also **The Vampire-Beast Craves Blood**) and **Witchfinder General** (also **The Conqueror Worm**). The former starred Peter Cushing, with American actor Vincent Price in UK original screenplay adaptation. As early as 1959, Arnold had produced the sensationalistic **Nudist Memoirs**, followed by **West End Jungle** (1961). He would return to these themes with **Secrets Of A Windmill Girl** (1966), **House Of Hookers** (also **A Touch Of The Other**, 1970) and **Sex Farm** (1973), his last known production. In 1972, he directed a West-End (London) musical, *Showcase,* featuring the popular singer Ronnie Hilton. Several of the movies were made with Tony Tenser, a fellow producer, who owned *Tigon British Films* (1966-72). In 1965, Tenser helped Roman Polanski with the production of the cult classic **Repulsion**, his first UK film and its follow-up, **Cul-de-sac** (1966). During an interview with **The Dark Side Magazine**, edited by Allen Bryce, Tenser said *"The producers were Arnold Miller and Stanley Long, who used to make shorts for the RAF. Stanley Long was the cameraman and Arnold Miller was the producer."* This was regarding the making of **Mini Weekend** (also The Tomcat, 1967). For the production of **The Sorcerers** (1967), Tony Tenser revealed it was necessary to purchase a London taxi, *"So we used it throughout the film, and he then sold it for more than he paid for it! That's why I loved Arnold Miller."*



Space Adventures 3 saw a return to science fiction on the cover to this title but Voodoo 6 had no change to the regular fare, although the original Fawcett cover was conspicuous by its absence. Above Battleground 1 premiered one of the more popular genres of the day.

The French Connection

During their first decade, *Miller* used several different sizes and processes before they settled on a stable format and price structure. Amongst the earliest known items are the photogravure (gravure) produced items. This is a high-quality, photo reproductive system, which allows for a range of tones and in the case of *Miller,* colour too. The colour was not the garish 4-colour type employed in America but subdued, subtle, pale blue, turquoise, mauve, violet,

Some of Miller's most sort after titles include their vaunted horror and science fiction reprints. Here we have a selection of them Marvel Tales 7, Pete Managan 55, Family Favourites 34 and Ghostly Weird 1.

yellow ochre, orange and green. These were often supplied singly, to enliven the otherwise stark black and white. The gravures were produced in two main forms. The earliest retained a blank border, as with the interiors of American colour comics. These were usually 12 or 16 pages long, unpriced and carried little information, possibly due to wartime restrictions. The issues were often skip numbered, which usually reflected the number of the US original.

The second type of gravure allowed for borderless images, especially suitable for covers and were printed on matt or semi-glossy paper. These were produced largely in France, in the immediate post-War period, c1946-51. They were usually 24, 32 or 36 pages long and priced at 6d (occasionally 9d). Among the producers were *Crete*, of Corbeil Essonnes, plus the Paris based *Agence Francaise de Presse* and *S.N.P.I.* Europe would later supply original features, which *Miller* packaged. Among them were **Blake The Trapper, Captain Tornado, Cary Colt, Kid Cowboy, Little Sheriff, Pango, Robin, Sergeant O'Brien, Tex Austin** and **Zorro**. Another producer of *Miller* gravure editions was the UK based *Sun Printers*, who also printed several large format editions, approx 8½" x 11½" (215 x 292mm). The gravure process was also used for several other UK comics, notably with the **Eagle, Girl, Swift, Mickey Mouse Weekly**, plus *T.V. Boardman's* one shot **Comic Series**. The latter featured Denis McLoughlin's superb *Buffalo Bill, Swift Morgan* and *Roy Carson* strips, alongside US reprints of *Plastic Man* and *Blackhawk.*

Size Matters...

Around 1950, *Miller* started to employ a number of UK based printers and switched to their staple format, for nearly a decade. This was the 24 page, news-pulp, B&W interior with a full colour, glossy cover. These were priced at 6d, commonly known as the *Miller 28-pager.* Although some eight pages less than the US editions, *Miller* usually managed to cram in the entire contents, by using the front and back covers, as necessary. The US originals would often contain several pages of advertising, anyway. Several titles from France and the UK were started at issue #50. Whether or not, this was to commemorate the new decade remains unknown. Some time after, *Miller* cancelled and restarted several of the *Fawcett Marvel Family* titles at #1. The dual approach to numbering continued into the mid 1950's. This period also witnessed an expansion into Eire, when they began printing in volume. Initially using *Cahill and Co,* Dublin, before switching to *Monument Press,* of 270 North Circular Rd, Dublin. This latter address, they also gave out as their own. There were also several items printed by *Munro Press, Ltd.,* Perth, Australia and no doubt distributed there, as well.

The year 1959, heralded the introduction of the 68-page, digest sized *"Miller 10D Series."* The titles were **Battle Action In Pictures, Bronc Saddler, Flash Gordon, Mark Conway, Marvel Tales, Romance Strip Stories, Space Adventures, Tex Austin** and **Theo Drake**. They proved a reformatted mix of European strips alongside US comic reprints (**Marvel Tales** from *Atlas* and *Charlton's* **Space Adventures**, featuring *The Blue Beetle).* These were launched in direct competition to the well-established and successful *Fleetway Library* series, which included **War Picture Library, Super Detective Library** and **Thriller Comics Library**. The attempt was abortive and none were thought to have survived beyond seven issues.

Squaring Up

This was followed by the introduction, of the 68-page, 1/ (shilling) squarebound editions, although reduced to 52pgs in the mid period. *Miller* had used this form since 1950, with such titles as **Battle Stories, Confidential Romances, Confidential Stories, Detective Comics** (second series), **Ken Maynard** (second series), **King Of The Royal Mounted, Life Story, Private Lives, Romantic Secrets** and **Western Stars**. With its attractive mix of *Magazine Enterprises* and *Atlas* (US) jungle fare, **Action Comics/ Action Series** (1958/ 9) was most welcome. The first issue featured Frank Frazetta's heroic take on *Thunda,* a *Tarzan* derivation. The squarebound format was in general use by *T&P* and would soon become the model for all *Alan Class* editions. Its instigation would see a sharp reduction in the number of titles on offer and prove the last

phase of *Miller's* long publishing career.

The final titles, all 68 page, comprised **Battle Ground, Flash Gordon** (second series), **King Of The Royal Mounted, Mandrake, Mystic, The Phantom, Rod Cameron** (one-shot), **Space and Adventure Comic, Spellbound, Voodoo, War** and **Zombie**. Only **Marvelman** and **Young Marvelman** would continue as 28-pagers, whilst **Davy Crockett, Kid Dynamite, Kid Montana, Life Story, Popeye, TV Heroes** and **Wyatt Earp** were phased out. Later editions indicated a third *Miller* address, 43/ 9 Folgate Street, Bishopsgate, London, E.1. It is during this final period that *Miller* stopped using the original covers. Why this was so, is not clear. The result was, a suitable splash page from an interior story would be revamped, or a new cover would be prepared. The new art supplied for these is truly bad. Where the splash was used, this could result in a new one being created or the page being dropped altogether. By the mid 1960's only **Mystic, Spellbound, Voodoo** and **Zombie** remained. *Miller's* horror quartet, found themselves disadvantaged against their new rival's output. *Alan Class* would effectively flood the market with more attractive fare and may have contributed to the cancellation of the surviving *Miller* titles, in 1966.

Bumper Adventures

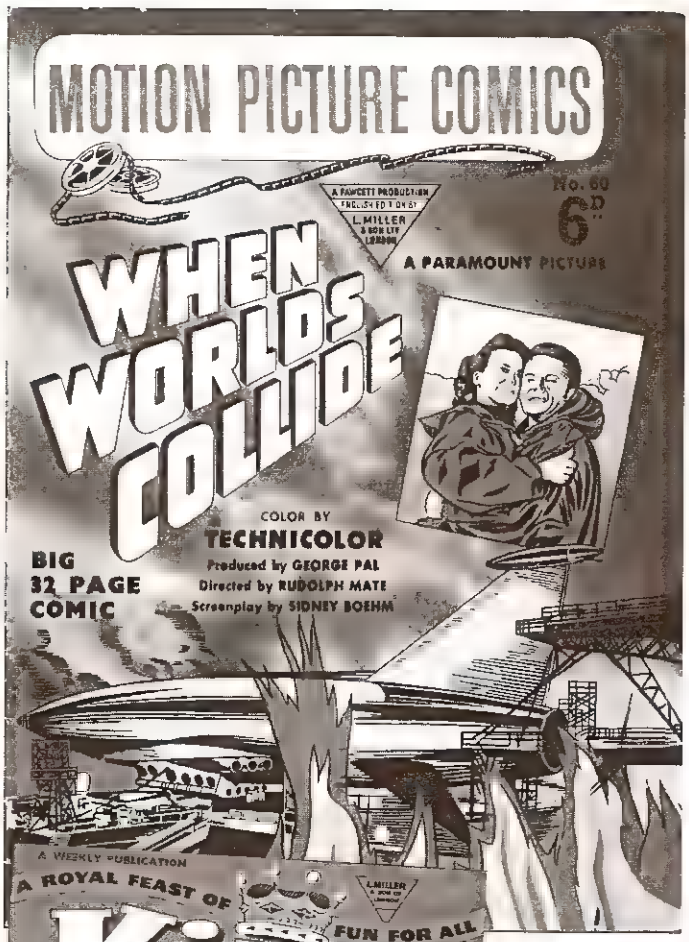
The earliest known *Miller* annuals are rebound editions of their old Comics. They include **American Comics Annual** (1943) and **Gift Comics**, 1949. There is also the undated **Ace Comics Annual**, which also rebound old *Miller* Comic books. These were followed by the **Captain Marvel** and **Captain Marvel Jr. Annuals**, with especially prepared full colour reprint material, from the Australian based *Munro Press*. They are unusual in that they were spiral bound, the only time that *Miller* used this format. The former was copyrighted 1952 (the latter, 1947) and most likely released for the Christmas season of 1952 or 1953. The collapse of *Fawcett's* comic empire meant the next editions were the chunky, card covered **Marvelman** and **Young Marvelman Annuals**, also from *Munro Press*. *Miller's* strip reprint titles **Family Favourites** and **King Comics** were also released as annuals, in the same format. All are undated but thought to be 1954. The following year saw new editions of the heroic duo, in similar style. Thereafter, they would have the more traditional board covers with illustrated spines (1956-9). There were also several other albums, colouring and magic books, which relate to *Captain Marvel* or *Marvelman* and his extended "family."

L. Miller also published several western albums/ annuals between 1956 and 1960, including **Bill Boyd, Cowboy Hero, Davy Crockett, Hopalong Cassidy, Rocky Lane** and **Six-Gun Heroes**. Many of *Miller's* albums were produced abroad, in Australia, Eire, Holland or Italy. Of interest to the horror and crime fan is the whopping **Black Magic Album**, of which two editions are suspected (c1953-4). **Space Comics Omnibus** (c1954) also exists in limited numbers. It rebound the first six issues of the regular comic, featuring *Captain Valiant*. There is also **Justice Traps The Guilty Album** (c1956), which tries to hide its all-*Atlas* (US) reprints beneath a Marv Stein, *Prize Comics* cover. The previously discussed **Mystic Bumper Book** and **Spellbound Albums**, from 1964 are gaining popularity, due to their impressive size and selective reprints. They were also the last of the large format items, from the *Miller* group.

We Can Get It For You, Wholesale

Part of the success of *L. Miller* was their ability to get product out, via their distribution service. Unsold items were offered in bundles of ten gross (1,440 items) for £12.00. This worked out at 2d (2 old pence) each. The counting was done by the packer, Fred but rechecked to avoid fiddling by the warehouse manager Oscar. They were then bundled up, to be carried away by their prospective sellers. This is recounted by the entrepreneur Ralph Gold in his *"rags to riches"* book, Good As Gold. Many were destined for the market stalls that flourished in post-war Britain.

The company also offered genuine US comics, which were advertised inside numerous *Miller* editions. The titles listed were **Blondie, Casper The Friendly Ghost, Dagwood, Dick Tracy, Herman and Catnip, Little Audrey, Little Lotta, Little Max, Sad Sack** and **Spooky**. These were no doubt ballast-copies, from the holds of ships returning from the US. They were all published by *Harvey* (US), who had hurriedly discontinued their horror lines, late1954, in favour of more kiddie oriented fare. These also turned up numerously at *F.W. Woolworth* and via market traders, during the late 1950's. This was before the general importation of American comics by *T&P* (1959 on). *Miller* also published books, magazine and toys. There was also a *Jolly Miller* juvenile range, with thin card covers. **Merry Mouse, Timmy The Kitten, Teddy Tar** and **Tuffy The Truck** are known. The



futuristic and highly desirable **Atomic Minor** water pistol, at half-a crown (2/6d) or it's larger cousin, the **Atomic Senior**, for one shilling more, were also available.

Miller's Crossing

In 1970, *L. Miller and Co* was successfully prosecuted under the *Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act, 1955*. This was for the selling of magazines such as **Horror Tales, Weird, Tales From The Tomb, Tales Of Voodoo**, etc. These were most likely import items from US publisher *Eerie Publications,* who repacked old horror yarns, with some new emendations. In their original form, horror comics had been the most criticised, on both sides of the Atlantic. It proved a sad epilogue and *Miller* ceased trading shortly after. The company had effectively ceased production of their own titles, in 1966. The death of family head, Leonard Miller, had probably bought this about.

By the early 1970's, a burgeoning dealer trade in comic books was emerging and several descended on the moribund *Miller,* for sporadic raids of their old stock. After more than 25 years in business, this amounted to a huge inventory, which littered the warehouse, still located at Hackney Road, London. It is certain that a stack of original artwork, some three foot high and numbering hundreds of sheets, was sold off. Much of it went back to the US in trade for golden-age US comics, to feed the growing demand in the UK. Printer's silver-proofs of *Phantom, Bulletman,* etc were also found and passed on within the trade. Ballast copies of several 1960's *Harvey* (US) giants, including **Black Cat, Joe Palooka** and **The Spirit** were also unearthed. *Toyman,* based in New York, also purchased multiple copies of *Miller's* **Mystic** and **Spellbound** issues, which they sold via adverts placed in **Comic Buyers Guide**.

Miller was a small but energetic company. Their output, during the heydays of the 1950's, was essential reading for many British children of the time. *Miller's* mix of hero and western titles reflected the popularity of the times and many produced epic runs. It has to be said, the *Arnold Book* editions nearly bought the house down. Parliament, that is! Yet, comics survived to fight another day. Despite their flimsy appearance, *Miller's* ephemeral 28-page or delicate gravure editions will find a way to endear themselves. Try one or two; you may be surprised how likeable they can be!

All information researched and compiled by: Frank Motler, England. *A Fatboy Production* *January 2005*

Motion Picture Comics enjoyed the science fiction of the day as did Mystery in Space 8 and Steve Samson 12. King Comics 4 contained more traditional offerings.

L. Miller & Son (& Co)/ Arnold Book Co,
Comic Book Index, 1940 - 1966

Part 1: Comic Books Continued

Comic Title, L. Miller:	Nos.	Format	Dates	Orig. Publisher	Remarks
Captain Tornado	#50-91	28p, 6d	c1952-3	European(r)	highest issue revision
Cowboy Jack The Sheriff	nn	52pg?, 1/-	c1960-3	UK original	See also Teddy Tar. New entry
Lovers	#1-17	28p, 6d	c1956-7	Atlas	highest issue revision
Moko The Circus Monkey	nn	52pg?, 1/-	c1960-3	UK original	See also Teddy Tar. New entry
Quick Trigger Western	#1-9	28p, 6d	c1956	Atlas	#3, Baker, Maneely, Williamson art.
Quick Trigger Western	#1-9	28p, 6d	c1956	Atlas	#3, Baker, Maneely, Williamson art.
Ramar Of The Jungle	#1-4	28p, 6d	c1956	CDC	
Ranger Western Comic	V2 #1-12	28p, 6d	c1954	United Features	Peters (Miller), formerly Laredo Crockett Ranger.
Ranger Western Comic	V3 #1-4	28p, 6d	c1955	United Features	Peters (Miller).
Real Western Hero	#70-74	grav, 32p, npc	1949-50	Fawcett	#71 published by Arnold Book Co.
Regal Comic	nn	28p, 6d	c1951	Fawcett	Bill Boyd, Rocky Lane, Tom Mix. Printer S.R. Verstage, Basingstoke.
Reward Comics	#1	?, ?	c1950s	US(r)	Arnold Book Co.
The Rider	#1-2	28p, 6d	c1957	Ajax	
Ringo Kid Western	#1-21	28p, 6d	c1955-6	Atlas	
Robin	#50-51?	24p, 6d	c1952-3	European	S.N.P.I.
Robin Hood	#1-34	28p, 6d	c1957-9	UK original	later issues part DC / CDC(r).
Rocky Lane Western	nn	grav, 12p, ?	c1950	Fawcett	
Rocky Lane Western	#50-139	28p, 6d	c1951-9	Fawcett/ CDC	
Rocky Mountain King	#1-65	28p, 6d	1955-9	UK original	Munro Press,
Rod Cameron Western	#1-8	32p, np	c1950	Fawcett	#8 oversize.
Rod Cameron Western	#50-64	24p, 6d	c1951-2	Fawcett	
Rod Cameron Western	#1	68p, 1/-	c1960	Fawcett/ CDC	
Romance Strip Story	#1-6	dig, 68p, 10d	c1959	strip(r)	digest size
Romantic Secrets	#1-24	68p, 1/-	c1950-54	Fawcett	
Romantic Story	#50-61	28p, 6d	c1955	CDC	
Rookie Cop	#1-3	28p, 6d	c1956	CDC	
Samson	#1-3	28p, 6d	c1955	Ajax	undersize 6 ½" x9" (165 x225mm).
Secret Story Romances	#1-2	28p, 6d	c1956	Atlas	
Sergeant O'Brien	#50-91	28p, 6d	1952-4	European(r)	S.N.P.I.
Sheriff Of Tombstone	#50-55	28p, 6d	c1959	CDC	
Six-Gun Heroes	#1-?	28p, 6d	Sep-50	Fawcett	
Six-Gun Heroes	#50-114	28p, 6d	1951-9	Fawcett/ CDC	#50 36pg.
Six-Gun Western	#1-7	28p, 6d	c1957	Atlas	slightly larger size 7¼" x 9¾" (180 x 245mm).
Slam Bang Comics	#1-8	28p, 6d	c1954	Fawcett	Bulletman appearances, covers #5 & 8.
Smiley Burnette Western	#1-4	28p, 6d	c1950	Fawcett	
Soldier Comics	#1-6	28p, 6d	c1952-3	Fawcett	
Space Adventures	#50-57	28p, 6d	c1954-5	CDC/ Atlas	
Space Adventures	#1-6	dig, 68p, 10d	c1959-60	CDC	digest size, starring Blue Beetle
Space And Adventure Comics	#1-2	68p, 1/-	c1961	UK original	
Space Comics	#50-81	28p, 6d	c1953-4	UK original	Starring Captain Valiant, Arnold Book Co. Gower Studios. #50 gravure, B&W, 32pg.
Space Commander Kerry	#50-55	28p, 6d	c1954-5	UK original	Gower Studios, Gifford art
Space Commando	#50-59	28p, 6d	c1954-5	UK original	Gower Studios, Gifford art
Space Travellers	#1-10	28p, 6d	c1950	United Features	Peters (Miller), Twin Earths reprints.

Captain Flash 1

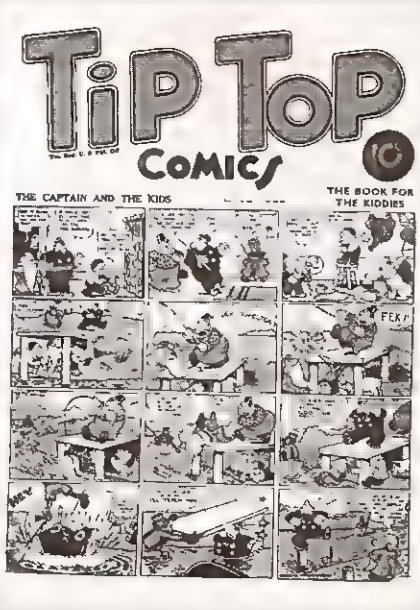
Human Torch 2

Miller Miniatures

Spark Man	#19	grav, 20p, ?	c1950	United Features	Peters (Miller),from Comics On Parade.
Sparkler Comics	#1-16	grav, 16p, np	c1948-9	United Features	Peters (Miller),becomes Comics On Parade.
Sparkler Comics	#1	grav, 16p, ?	Feb-1948	United Features	
Speed Kings Comic	#8-19	28p, 6d	1953-4	UK original	Sports Cartoons Ltd (Miller),
Spellbound	#1-66	52/ 68p, 1/-	1961-6	Atlas, Farrell, etc	mid-period editions reduced to 52pg.
Spy Smasher	#50-54	28p, 6d	c1953	Fawcett	
Star Comic	#1-2	20p, 4d	1954	UK original	Peters (Miller), Bob Monkhouse, Morecombe & Wise, etc.
Startling Terror Tales	#1	68p, 1/-	c1954	Star	Arnold Book Co.
Steve Samson	#1-40	28p, 6d	1953-5	UK original	Sports Cartoons Ltd (Miller). Later editions published by Miller.
Strange Worlds	#8-19	28p, 6d	1953-5	UK original	Sports Cartoons Ltd (Miller),
Super-Sonic The Super Comic	#13-16	28p, 6d	1953-4	UK original	Man's World. becomes Steve Samson
Sweethearts	#50-54	28p, 6d	c1956	CDC	
Swift Arrow	#1-3	28p, 6d	c1957	Ajax	
Tales From The Crypt	#1-2	68p, 1/-	c1954	EC, etc	Arnold Book Co.
Target Comics	#1-6	28p, 6d	c1952-3	Star	
Tarzan Comic	Vol.1 #1-4	68p, np	c1950-1	United Features	Peters (Miller), 1st UK Tarzan series. Burne Hogarth art.
Tarzan Comic	Vol.2 #1-15	32p, 6d	c1950-1	United Features	Peters (Miller)
Teddy Tar	nn	52pg?, 1/-	c1960-3	UK original	several different editions. See also Merry Mouse, Moko, Tuffy
Tex Austin	#1-3	dig, 68p, 10d	c1959	European(r)	strip digest.
Tex Ritter Western	#50-99	28p, 6d	c1951-9	Fawcett/ CDC	#50-52 are 36pg.
Texas Rangers In Action	#1-17	28p, 6d	c1958-9	CDC	
Theo Drake Detective	#1-6	dig, 68p, 10d	c1959	strip	digest size
Thundering Trail Western Comic	nn	28p, 6d	c1950s	Fawcett	Lash LaRue, reprints Fawcett Movie Comic #11 (UK #11).
Timmy The Kitten	nn	?, ?	c50's	UK original?	Illustrated by Dorothy Hall, Jolly Miller Book.
Tip Top Comics	#1-2	grav, 32p, 10cc	1940-1	United Features	two different issues
Tom Mix Western	var	grav, 16p, 36pc	1949-50	Fawcett	three different editions, nn, nn oversize, #3.
Tom Mix Western	#50-133	var, 6d	c1949-59	Fawcett	#50 32pg gravure, #51-65 36pg, #66 on 28 pg.
Triple Terror	#20	20p, ?	c1949	United Features	Peters (Miller),
True Life Adventures	#12-19	28p, 6d	c1952-5	UK original	Sports Cartoons Ltd (Miller),
True Life Secrets	#1-20	28p, 6d	c1952-5	CDC	
True Life Sport	#1	28p, 6d	c1952-5	UK original	Sports Cartoons Ltd (Miller),
True Secrets	#1-18	28p, 6d	c1955-7	Atlas	
Tuffy The Truck	nn	52pg?, 1/-	c1953	UK original	See also Teddy Tar & Merry Mouse.
Comic Title, L. Miller:	Nos.	Format	Dates	Orig._Publisher	Remarks
TV Heroes	#1-7	36p, 6d	c1958	UK original	UK comic format
TV Heroes	#8-26	28-36p, 6d	c1958-60	UK original	regular "Miller" format
Two-Gun Kid	#1-38	28p, 6d	c1955-8	Atlas	
Two-Gun Western	#1-12?	28p, 6d	c1952	Atlas	
Vault Of Horror	#1	68p, 1/-	c1955	EC, etc	Arnold Book Co., may not exist
Vic Flint	#1-2?	28p, 6d	c1955	United Press	NEA Service, Inc. strip(r),
Vic Torry & His Flying Saucer	#1	32p, 6d	c1951	Fawcett	
Voodoo		#1-9	52/ 68p, 1/-	c1962-4	Atlas, Farrell, etc
Wanted		nn	grav, var, ?	c1948	Orbit 3 different versions, 16 & 36pg. Arnold Book Co.
War	#1-11	68p, 1/-?	c1961-2	various	Atlas/ Farrell/ Fawcett contents, see also Battle Stories.
War At Sea	#1-?	28p, 6d	c1958	CDC	
Warpath Western Comics	nn	28p, 6d	c1950s	Fawcett	Reprints US Fawcett Movie Comic #13 (Miller #54).
Western Hero	#50-149	28p, 6d	50-9	Fawcett	
Western Kid	#1-17	28p, 6d	c1955-6	Atlas	
Western Outlaws	#1-2	28p, 6d	c1954	Atlas	

Robin Hood 1

Secret Story Romances 2



Tip Top Comics (circa 1941)

Western Stars Comic	#1-17	68p, 1/-	c1954-8	Fawcett	
Western Trails	#1-5	28p, 6d	c1957	Atlas	
Whiz Comics	nn, #60-71	grav, 16p, ?	c1944-6	Fawcett	#65 36pg @ 9d. #71 non-gravure
Whiz Comics	#50-70	32p, 6d	c1950-2	Fawcett	oversize, Sun Printers Limited, England.
Whiz Comics	#71-128	32p, 6d	c1953-9	Fawcett	regular size Sun Printers Limited, England.
Wild Bill Hickok & Jingles	#1-16	28p, 6d	c1954	CDC	
Wild Frontier	#1-3?	28p, 6d	c1954	CDC	
Wild Western	#1-7	28p, 6d	c1955	CDC	
Wonder Boy	#1-3	28p, 6d	c1955	Ajax	
Wow Comics	var	grav, 16p, ?	c1943-50	Fawcett	Eight different, nn (68pg), nn, #30, 42, 44, 45, 49, 55, 66.
Wyatt Earp	#1-44	28p, 6d	c1957-60	Atlas/ CDC	
Young Brides	#1-34	68p, 1/-	1957-8	Prize	Arnold Book Co., later issues by Strato.
Young Eagle	#1-4	24p, grav?, 6d	c1951	Fawcett	
Young Eagle	#50-58	28p, 6d	c1954-6	Fawcett	
Young Eagle	#1-3	28p, 6d	c1954-6	CDC	reprints Charlton #3(1) through 5.
Young King Cole Detective Tales	#1-2	28p, 6d	c1950	Star	L.B. Cole covers.
Young Love	#1-11	68p, 1/-	c1957-8	Prize	Arnold Book Co., later issues by T&P
Young Marvelman	#25-370	28p, 6d	54-63	UK original	based on Captain Marvel Jr, Gower Studios.
Young Romance	#1-33	68p, 1/-	c1957-8	Prize	Arnold Book Co., later issues by Strato.
Zaza The Mystic	#1-2	28p, 6d	c1955-6	CDC	
Zombie		#1-9	52/ 68p, 1/-	c1962-4	Atlas, Farrell, etc
Zorro	#50-88	24p, 6d	1952-4	European(r)	#51 published by S.N.P.I,., #62 Mundial Press.,#88 Miller, see note 3b.

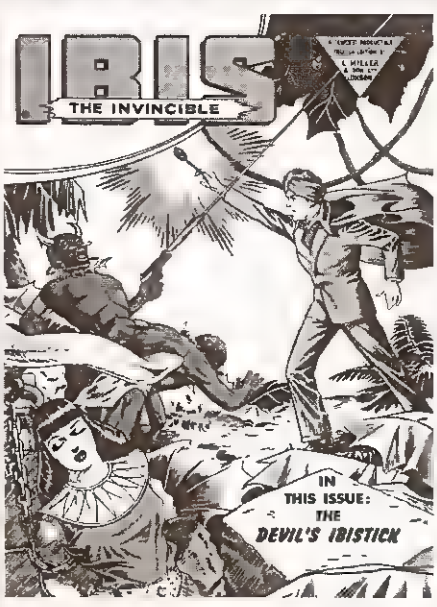
Part 2:_Comic Books, Related Titles

Battle	#1-	28p, 6d	1960-1	UK original	Anglo, distributed by Atlas.
Captain Miracle	#1-9	68p, 1/-	1960-1	UK original	Anglo, distributed by Atlas. Reprints of Marvelman, Don Lawrence art. #5 flying saucer c.
Foursome Comic	#1-16	68p, 1/-	c1950's	UK original	Westworld (distributed by Miller).
Tarzan Adventures	V1-V9	28p, 6d	1953-9	US reprint	Westworld (distributed by Miller). Edited by Michael Moorcock, 1957/8.
Tarzan, The Grand Adv. Comic	V1-2	28p, 6d	1951-3	US reprint	Westworld (distributed by Miller).
Thrilling Hero	#12-19	28p, 6d	1953-4	UK original	Man's World Ltd, distributed by Atlas.
T.V. Features	#1-8	28p, 6d	1960-1	UK original	Gower Studios, Gifford art.

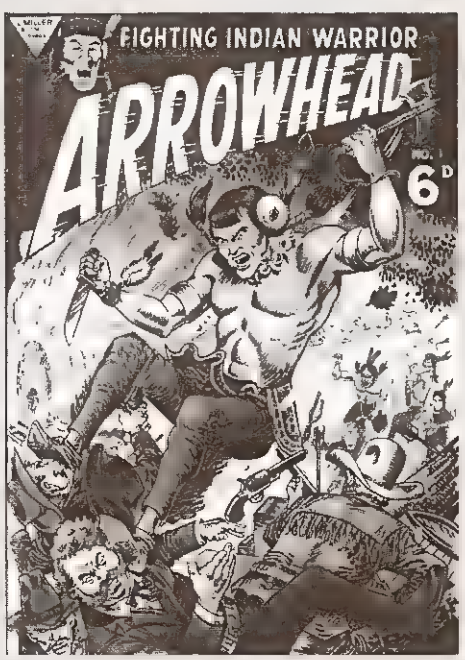
Part 3: Albums, Annuals & Miscellaneous Items

L. Miller, Annuals + Misc:	Nos.	Format	Dates	Orig._Publisher	Remarks
Ace Comics Annual	nn	grav, ?, ?	1940's	US(r)	Old Miller Comics rebound, contents vary.
Ace Western Comics Annual	nn	96p, 2/6	c1955	Fawcett	board cover, Old Miller Comics rebound.
American Comic Annual	#1	grav, 68p, ?	c1943	US(r)	
Best Detective Cases	#1-2	?, ?	c51	Fawcett	paperback sized?
Bill Boyd Western Annual	#1-5	96p, 2/6	c1956-60	Fawcett	board covers
Billy The Kid Album					information req'd.
Black Magic Album	#1-2	164p, 3/6	c1954-5	Prize, Atlas, etc	Arnold, card cover. #2 may not exist.
Captain Marvel Annual	nn	64p, 2/6	c1952	Fawcett	larger format, 8" x 10½" (215 x 272), spiral bound, full colour contents, card cover. Printed by Munro Press, Australia.
Captain Marvel Colouring Book	nn	24p/ ?	c1948	Fawcett	based on US original?
Captain Marvel Christmas Special					See Captain Marvel #42 (gravure)
Captain Marvel Jr Annual	nn	64p, 2/6	c1952	Fawcett	(copyright 1947), as for Captain Marvel Annual.
Cowboy Hero Comic Annual	#1-4	96p, 2/6	c1957-60	Fawcett	board covers
Cowboy Jack & Davy Crockett Album	nn	96p, np	c1958	DC, St. John	cover is partial swipe from Dan'l Boone #1. Red Wolf, Kid Cowboy,

Western Hero 117



Ibis the Invincible 5



Arrowhead 1

					plus Cheyenne Joe by Matt Baker.
Family Favourites Comic Annual	nn	96p, 2/6	c1958-9	US reprints	Jolly Miller, card cover, red colour overlay all pages. 8" x 11" (205 x 280mm). Reprints Terry & The Pirates, Little Orphan Annie.
Famous Racing Cars	nn	24p, ?	c1959	UK original?	Hard cover, colour photos & descriptions of racing cars.
For Boys Only (US).	#1-2	dig, 96p, 1/-	c1959	Baily (US)	information required. Published & edited by Bernard Baily
French For Murder	nn			Fawcett	novel by Bernard Mara
Gift Comics	nn	132p, np	1949	Fawcett	card cover
Gift Comics Contents	#1-2	192p, 3/6	c1951-2	Fawcett	board covers, cloth spine. Coverless Miller editions rebound.
					of #2: Bob Colt #52, Captain Marvel #62, 63, Cap Marvel Jr #62, Master #62, 63; produced by Agence Francaise
de Presse, Paris. Happy Boys & Girls Comic Album art	#1-2	96p, 2/6	c1958-9	various	board covers, original UK
					& Atomic Mouse reprints, etc.
Hopalong Cassidy Western Comic	#1	96p, 2/6	c1959	King Features	board covers, cloth spine. Issue & price inside.
					Strip(r). Annual
Illustrated Love	#1	96p, 2/6	c1958-9	St John etc.	Hard cover. Matt Baker art.
Jolly Book Comic Album	#1-2	96p, 2/6	c1958-60	UK original	card cover, format as for Family Favourites Annual
(Justice Traps The) Guilty Album	#1	128p, 2/6	c1956	Prize/ Atlas	Arnold, card cover. Note the US series was by Prize. This edition is all Atlas crime(r). Entitled Guilty Album on frontis-
piece.					
King Comics Comic Annual	nn	96p, 4/-	1954	US reprints	card cover, red colour overlay all pages.
Marvelman Adventures	nn	96p, 2/6	c1957	Fawcett	board covers
Marvelman Annual	#1-2	96p, 4/-	1954-5	UK original	card cover, format as for Family Favourites Annual, Spaceman (Atlas) reprints by Sekowsky & Tuska #2. Gower Studios art.
Marvelman Annual	#3-6	96p, 2/6	1956-9	UK original	board covers, Gower Studios art.
Marvelman Family Annual	#1	96p, 2/6	1959	UK original	board covers, Gower Studios art.
Marvelman Jr Annual	#1	96p, 2/6	1963	UK original	board covers, Gower Studios art.
Marvelman Magic	nn	96p, 2/6	1950s	UK original	card cover, possibly 3 diff. Ed's, Gower Studios art?
Mystic Bumper Book	nn	96p, 2/6	1964	Atlas	large format 8½" x 10¾" (215 x 275), card cover, price inside front cover. One Kirby monster sty + Atlas horror/ mystery.
Regal Comic Album	nn				
Rocky Lane Western Annual	#1-4	96p, 2/6	c1957-60	Fawcett	board covers
Six-Gun Heroes Comic Annual	#1-6	96p, 2/6	c1955-9	Fawcett	board covers
Space Comics Omnibus	nn	132p, ?	c1954-5	UK original	starring Captain Valiant, Comic issues #55-60 rebound.
Spellbound Album	nn	96p, 2/6	1964	Atlas, Fawcett	Price on front cover, o/w as for Mystic Bumper Book.
True West (Magazine)	#1	36p, 1/3	1958	US reprint	Text with photos.
Young Marvelman Adventures	nn	96p, 2/6	c1954	UK original	board covers
Young Marvelman Adventures	nn	96p, 2/6	1963	UK original	board covers
Young Marvelman Annual	#1-2	96p, 4/-	1954-5	UK original	card cover, format as for Family Favourites Annual . Gower Studios art. #2 contains Spaceman (Atlas) reprints by Maneely.
Young Marvelman Annual	#3-7	96p, 2/6	1956-60	UK original	Board covers. Gower Studios art.
Young Marvelman Magic	nn	96p, 2/6	1950s	UK original	card cover, possibly 3 diff. Editions.

Part 4: Notes & Acknowledgements

1a/ We are extremely grateful to the following:- Ken Harman Comics & The Book Palace UK for access to numerous editions, whilst researching this article.; to Michael Harvey who checked through numerous items from his own collection, to confirm & amend the above information.; finally to Alan Austin & Steve Holland, who between them came up with the wonderfully evocative 1960's photograph of the Miller warehouse in Hackney, London (see part 1, From The Tomb #15). Alan kindly supplied information, plus scan, about the ABC edition of On The Spot.

1b/ This index lists all known Comic books published by Len Miller & related subsidiaries. There will no doubt be other items which will come to light in the future but we have made this listing as accurate as is possible. See part 7 for publisher listing, with addresses, plus note 3b & part 6. We have also included known annuals, albums & related items.

1c/ This completely original list was compiled by Frank Motler, with additions & corrections by Michael Harvey & P.R. Garriock. We have referred extensively to the works of the late Denis Gifford, particularly The Complete Catalogue Of British Comics, 1985.

2a/ Key: ABC = Arnold Book Co., c = circa (e.g. c1955-9), dig = digest, grav = photogravure (gravure, for brevity) printed edition, min = Miniature, nn = no number, np = no price (unpriced), (r) = reprint, var = various.

2b/ Title: As stated in indicia or title page, but taken from front cover, if not given. The majority of US reprints reused the original title.

Part 4: Continued

2c/ Nos (numbering): Prior to 1950 many editions are skip-numbered or unnumbered. This may have been part of a Miller one-shot system or taken from original US edition No. Early editions often placed the issue number in a circle near the indicia. In 1950 Miller introduced several titles starting at number #50. However, after some time, several long-running titles were restarted at #1. After 1952, the #50 series numbering was employed for new Charlton, Fawcett, plus Gower Studios & retained for some existing titles until c1959. All other Miller titles (except note 2c) used conventional sequential numbering.

2d/ Final editions: Again no accurate data exists for the last issues of numerous titles. We have compiled the above numbering-ranges from numerous catalogue lists, personal copies (thanks again Mick Harvey!) & the late great, Denis Gifford's reference works.

2e/ Format: The third column above will indicate special printing (if any), page count (including covers, if paper), the price in old Imperial UK Sterling. Miller Comic book editions were published in their main formats, indicated in order of fre quency:-

1: Regular 28 pages (occasionally 24 or 32), including glossy coloured covers, B&W contents, stapled at spine. Typically 7¼" x 10¼" (180 x 260mm), 6d cover price, the staple item from 1950-63. Prior to 1951, there are occa sional regular editions with colour too. These will be noted where known. Around 1956-7 printer Davenport Askew produced several undersize editions of around 6 ½" x9"

(165 x225mm).

2: Squarebound 68 pages (also 52), including glossy coloured covers, B&W contents, glued at spine. Typically 1/- cover price, 7 ¼" x 9 ½" (180 x 240mm). The standard format from 1960-6, largely printed by Verstage. Battle Stories, Confidential Roms, Romantic Secrets & Western Stars are early Miller versions c1950-8. There were also several Arnold Book Co editions, printer Jenson Book Co., or Love & Malcolmson Ltd c1952-9.

3: Gravure printed editions. These are usually c1940-51, in several different sizes & page counts, 12, 16, 24, 32, 36 & 64 are known, size 8 ¾" x 7" (178 x 223mm). There are two basic types, the earliest variety with a plain margin & more regular type with borderless cover. The printing allowed for some colour, which could be provided throughout, or on selected pages. Most are stapled but some are glued or loose paged editions. Prices on the early editions are usually absent but 3d & 4d editions are thought to exist. Due to their early date many are uncommon to scarce.

4: Digest sized 68 page, including glossy coloured covers, B&W contents, glued at spine, squarebound, 10d cover price, circa 1959-60. Size 5 ¼" x 7" (132 x 178mm). Known titles: - Battle Action In Pictures, Bronc Saddler, Flash Gordon, Mark Conway, Marvel Tales, Romance Strip Stories, Space Adventures, Tex Austin & Theo Drake. More information is required about Love Affair.

5: Oversize large format, editions also exist, approx 8½" x 11½" (215 x 292mm), c1952. Known titles: - Captain Marvel, Captain Marvel Jr, Funny Animals, Ken Maynard #4, Marvel Family #60-65, Master, Rod Cameron #8, Tom Mix and Whiz #50-70.

6: Miniature There are two unpriced photogravure editions, undated but thought c1942. The covers are on china paper, with the interiors on newsprint. Each side is printed with a different tint. Captain & The Kids (size 5 5/8" x 4," 144 x 101mm): green (cover), blue (inside cover), red, brown, violet & green (centre). Ella Cinders (5½" x 3¾," 142 x 95mm): red (cover), orange (inside cover), green, violet, brown, red (centre). These may have been part of a larger set. See also Egbert The Explorer and Hookey's Hoard (1943, recorded by Denis Gifford).

2f/ Sizes: Due the variety of printers there was some real variation but the sizes given above are representative.

2g/ Dates: In common with most UK publishers of reprint titles, dates are often absent. In the case of Miller, there is often copyright dating of the title in USA. This can lead to assumptions that these Comics are older than they are. Matching the items with the dates of the US originals will often corroborate this. The above dates are arrived at from a knowledge of US originals, indicia dates & those supplied by the erstwhile Denis Gifford. See also note 4.

2h/ Orig. Publisher: Will show original US publisher, or whether European(r) or UK original.

2i/ Remarks: The publisher, if a Miller subsidiary or Arnold, will be given in the remarks. If original UK material is printed, the studio or artist(s) will also be given, where known. Artists for the Gower Studio, 164, Gower Street, London, N.W.1 include Mick Anglo, Sidney Anglo, Charles Baker, Roy Castle, Frank Daniels, Peter Ford, Denis Gifford, Roshan Kanga (letterer), Don Lawrence, Norman Light, Roy Parker, George Parlett, Leo Rawlings, Dorothy Saporito (inker & cover colourist), Maurice Saporito, Stanley White & John Whitlock. Info obtained from Nostalgia: Spotlight On The 1950's.

3a/ The indicia for Steve Samson #12 reads: "publisher Sports Cartoons, Ltd., The Manor House, Worcester Park, Surrey. Sole distributors: L. Miller & Son Ltd., 342/ 4 Hackney Road, London, E.2. Printed In England by the Carlton Press, 3 Racquet Court, London, E.C.4."

3b/ Zorro was a European, possibly French, original title based on the classic O. Henry masked hero. Early issues were drawn by Andre Oulie & published by S.N.P.I,., then Mundial Press. & finally Miller, who appear to have distributed all issues (see also part 6).

3c/ Denis Gifford lists Battle Stories #2-9 as 68pg editions. All known copies are 28pg. He may have confused this title with Battle Ground, which was 68pg.

4/ Contemporary issues:
Cowboy Western (Miller) # 24: Bill Boyd, Colorado Kid, Captain Tornado, Four Aces, Gabby Hayes, Hopalong, Kid Dynamite, Lash LaRue, Lorna, Master C, Love Roms, Mountain King, Monte Hale, Nyoka, Pancho Villa, Pango, Rocky Lane, Rod Cameron, Sgt O'Brien, Six-Gun Heroes, Tex Ritter, True Secrets, Western Hero, Zorro. Copyright 1953 (reprints US #58, Charlton, Jan-56).Mandrake (Miller) #22: Mystic, Spellbound, War, Battleground, Popeye, Phantom, Young Marvelman, TV Heroes #25, 26: Blondie, Dagwood, Sad Sack, Little Audrey, Dick Tracy, Mutt & Jeff, Spooky, Little Dot, Herman & Catnip, Casper, Little Max. Miller & Co. Printer: Davenport Askew & Co., London Rd., Mitchum, Surrey.

Part 5: Printers Used By The Miller Group (see also Producers, part 6)

The following is just a sampling of various companies used. Prior to 1946, the printer was uncredited, possibly due to the restrictions of World War II (1949-45). Many post-war gravure items were produced & printed in France (see part 6). These include numerous Captain Marvel family, western & other early Fawcett titles.

Only a sampling is indicated below. During the 1950's various issues were printed by Munro Press, Australia & were probably sold there too. Numerous items were also printed by Cahill & Co, plus Monument Press, Republic Of Ireland. The latter is thought to be a Miller subsidiary, as the two addresses match. There are also occasional items from the 1960's listed as "Printed In Italy" etc, these are credited as shown: -

Brodard & Taupin, Paris, France: Bob Colt #52, Bulletman #10, Captain Marvel #62, 63; Cap Marvel Jr #62, Casey Ruggles #4, Don Winslow #51, 54; Lance O'Casey #10, Master #62, 63, Motion Picture Comics #50.

Cahill & Co., Ltd., Parkgate Printing Works, Kingsbridge, Dublin: Hopalong Cassidy Western #1, Young Marvelman Annual '58, '59

Carlton Press (1), 113 Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.2: Black Knight #1, 3-4 (#2 no indication, #5 Davenport Askew).

Carlton Press (2), 3 Racquet Court, London, E.C.4: Arrowhead #1, Hot Rod C #7, Steve Samson #12, Zorro #62.

Clarendon Printers, Beaconsfield: Don Winslow #114-142.

Clarendon/ Verstage (cover/ contents): Bronco West #1, Buffalo Bill 'Cody' #1, 10; Bulldog Brittain #1, Captain Flash #1.

H. Clarke & Co., Ltd: Quick-Trigger Western #3, Six-Gun Western #5, Sweethearts #54.

Crete, Corbeil-Essonnes (France): Bob Swift #1-3, Captain Video #1,2,4; Don Winslow #54, Tom Mix #58, 63; Zorro #51

Davenport Askew & Co.(1), 335, London Road, Mitchum, Surrey (see note 2e1): Battle Action In Pictures #1 (digest), Black Knight #5, Confidential Romances #13, Confidential Stories #28, Dan'l Boone #1, Daniel Boone #5, Davy Crockett Album, Foreign Intrigues #1, Jim Bowie nn, #1; Mr. Muscles #2, Samson #1, Secret Story Roms #2, Slam Bang #8, Space Advs #3 (digest), Tex Austin #1 (digest), TV Heroes #1, 25, Vic Flint #1.

Davenport Askew & Co. (2), 134, St. Paul's Way, London, E.3: Battle (Mick Anglo) #2, Phantom #12 (68pg), Private Lives nn, TV Heroes #26.

Dragon Press, Luton, Beds. Atomic Mouse #1

Jenson Books, Oadby, Leicestershire (see note 2e2): most ABC. 68pg editions (& Thorpe & Porter editions also, c1950 on). See also Love & Malcolmson.

John Blackburn Ltd., 232, Cardigan Road, Leeds: Bible Tales For Young People #1, Pete Mangan #55, Robin Hood #1;

Love & Malcolmson Ltd., London & Redhill, Surrey, Advs Into The Unknown #1,6-11,14- (#5 printed by Jenson); Forbidden Worlds #1,2. (all ABC editions).

Manton Press Ltd., Baylis Road, London S.E.1: Space & Adv Comics #2 (c1961).

Manton/ Monument (cover/ contents): Mandrake #9, Phantom #7, Rod Cameron #1 (all 68pg).

Monument Press (Miller subsidiary), 270 North Circular Rd, Dublin: Blake The Trapper #1, Cheyenne Kid #9, Colorado Kid #32, Cowboy Western #24, Davy Crockett #2, Fightin' Air Force #1, Frontline Combat #4, Kid Montana #50, Lone Eagle #1, Lorna #1, Mike Barnett #54, Mystery In Space #8, Pango #81, Space Commando #50-58, Wild Western #5, Zorro #88.

Munro Press, Ltd., Perth, Australia: Blue Bolt #2, Captain Marvel & Jr Annuals'52, Colorado Kid #1, Kid Dynamite #1, Marvelman Ann. #1&2, MysteryComic Tales #3, Pete Mangan #52, Rocky Mountain King #1, Space Advs #55, Space Commander Kerry #52-55, Young King Cole #1, Young Marvelman Annual #1.

New Avenue Press, 3/ 4, Sherwood Street, London, W.1: Pete Mangan #50-51, Space Comics #55, Space Commander Kerry #51.

Printed In Holland: Marvelman Family Annual #1, Marvelman Junior Annual #1, Young Marvelman Annual '57

Printed In Italy: Spellbound #66, Voodoo #9.
Printed In Netherlands: Mystic & Spellbound Albums, Young Marvelman Annual '60,
S.N.E.P, Imprimerie Châteaudun, 59-61, rue La Fayette, Paris 90, France: Bob Swift #1-3.
Sun Printers Limited, England, Captain Midnight #11, Funny Animals #50-53; Space Comics #50 (all gravure); Whiz C #65 (oversize).
S.R. Verstage & Sons, Basingstoke (see also Clarendon/ Verstage): Bronco West #1, Captain Midnight #130, Detective #5 (68pg), Flash Gordon (68pg), Mandrake #13, 22, Marvelman Ann. #2, Mystic #1,4-6,18; Pete Mangan #53, Phantom #13, Spellbound #1,4-6,9-12, 23; War #4,5; Young Marvelman Ann. #2. Most squarebounds 1961 on.

Part 6: Distributors & Producers For The Miller Group

Agence Francaise de Presse, Paris, France, producers: Bob Colt #52, Bob Swift #1-3, Bulletman #10, Captain Marvel #62, 63, Captain Marvel Jr #62, CaseyRuggles #4, Don Winslow #51, 54; Gift Comics (album) #2, Hot Rod Comics #1, Lance O'Casey #10, Master #62, 63; Motion Picture Comics #50.
Atlas Publishing, 18, Bride's Lane, London, E.C.4, distributors: Battle #2 (Anglo), (for information only).
Comyns (Publishers) Ltd., 139, Borough High St., London, S.E.1, distributors: Space Comics #55, 56 (ABC).
L. Miller & Son, 342/ 344 Hackney Road, London, E.2, distributors: ABC 28pg editions c1946-53, L. Miller, Man's World, Peters (Dependable), S.N.P.I. & Sports Cartoons items.
S.N.P.I,. 22 Rue Bergere, Paris, producers/ publishers: Pango, Robin, Sgt. O'Brien, Zorro (distributed by Miller).
Thorpe & Porter, Oadby, Leicestershire, distributors: all ABC 68pg editions (c1951-9), 28pg editions c1954, including Space Comics #63-81.

Part 7: Miller Group Addresses

Arnold Book Co (ABC): 342/ 344 Hackney Road, London, E.2 (c1946-53); 16 The Forum, High Street, Edgware(c1946-53); 2 Lower James St., London, W.1 (c1954-9); L. Miller: 342/ 344 Hackney Road, London, E.2 (1945 -c64); 270 North Circular Road, Dublin (1950's, see also Monument Press); 43/ 9 Folgate Street, Bishopsgate, London, E.1. (c1965-6).
Donald F. Peters Ltd, 70 High Holborn, London, W.C.1 (c1953-5);
Mick Anglo Ltd, 50 Hampstead Road, London, N.W.1 (information only, not a Miller group company).
S.N.P.I,. 22 Rue Bergere, Paris (c1951); Mundial Press., 113 Shoe Lane, London, E.C.4 (c1952);
Sports Cartoons Ltd: The Manor House, Worcester Park, Surrey; 33 Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey (c1953-5).

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From The Tomb # 11, "Not For The Squeamish, Black Magic British Edition" (+ index), by Frank Motler & P.R. Garriock, Peter Normanton, England Oct-03
From The Tomb # 12, "Through A Glass, Darkly" by P.R. "Doc" Garriock & Frank "Davros" Motler, Peter Normanton, England Feb-04
From The Tomb #14, "Quantum Leap: Alan Class" (+ index), by Frank Motler & P.R. Garriock, Peter Normanton, England Halloween-04
From The Tomb #15, "The Miller's Tale Pt1" (+ index), by Frank Motler, P.R. Garriock & Michael Harvey, Peter Normanton, England 2005
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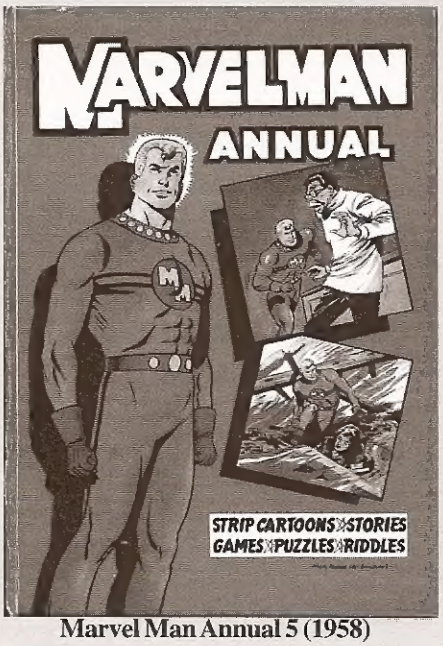
All information researched and compiled by: Frank Motler, England. A Fatboy Production January 2005



Marvel Man Annual 5 (1958)

36 PAGE COMIC
WANTED
COMICS
RUN, LITTLE MAN! YOU DON'T HAVE FAR TO GO BEFORE YOU REACH THE END OF THE TRAIL! NO MORE RUNNING FOR YOU THEN...FOR DEATH HOLDS EVERYONE IN A STILL EMBRACE! AND WHO WILL BELIEVE YOU ARE FLEEING FROM YOURSELF!
GO ON, KILL ME! GET IT OVER WITH! I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER!
Wanted

Phantom 13

cover and Schomburg's five-page *"Trespasser In Time"* in its slim contents. There was also a companion, the similarly styled **Boy Cowboy**. Its redundant prefix, now **Kid Cowboy** for general release.

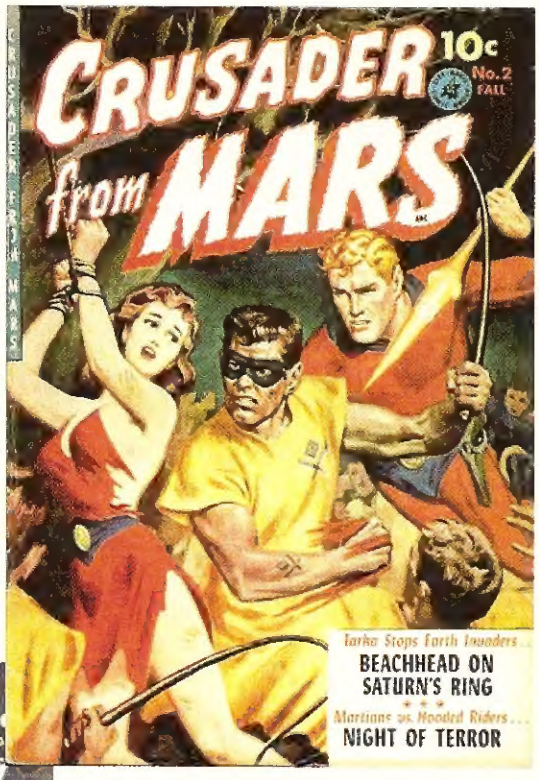
Pen-Pals

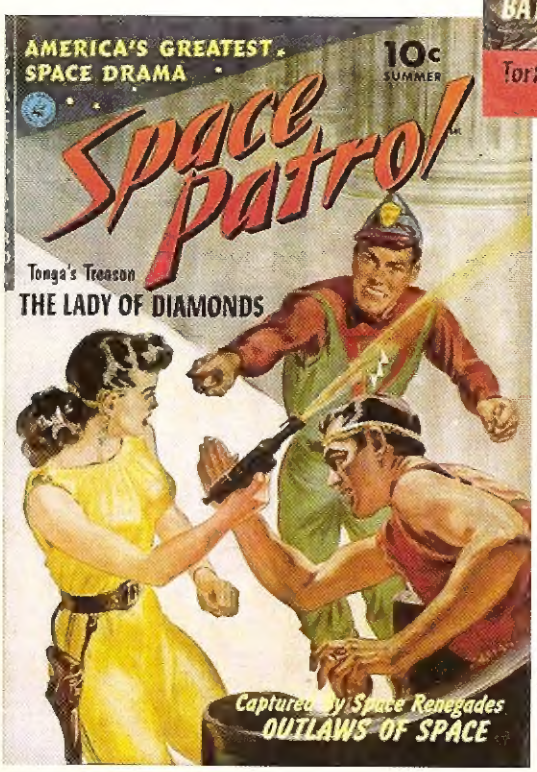
Amazing Adventures appeared on the newsstands, later that year. It reprised the earlier cover but without the blank border, now in full colour. It had been painted by Robert Gibson Jones, supplier of covers for numerous science fiction magazines. The Schomburg story, now accompanied by others from Wally Wood (the beautiful *"Winged Death On Venus"),* Murphy Anderson and Ogden Whitney. **Amazing Adventures** would soon be joined by a science fiction quartet, the eponymous duo **Crusader From Mars** and **Lars Of Mars**, plus **Space Buster** and **Space Patrol**. Both Space titles featured Berni Krigstein art, whilst the latter, an adaptation of an early radio and TV series. In the heady year of 1951, *Ziff-Davis* published more than forty titles. Attractive painted covers were featured exclusively, during this period. Most survived just two or three issues and by 1952, were gone.

Amazing Adventures endured six issues then bowed out. Only one *Ziff-Davis* comic would thrive, the grinning military everyman, **G.I. Joe**. He was amongst the first to acknowledge President Truman's *"police action,"* the Korean War (1950-3). During 1955, the painted covers were superseded by line-drawn ones, plus several interior pages given over to letters from pen-pals. After dropping back to bi-monthly schedule, the last copy (**#51**) appeared, dated June 1957. There followed a scarce giveaway, from *ACG's Custom Comics* division *(Hasbro Toys,* 1967). After a further lull, the title was resurrected by *Marvel,* also based on the successful activity toy. *Ziff-Davis'* **Cinderella Love, The Hawk, Kid Cowboy, Nightmare, Romantic Marriage** and **Wild Boy** also survived, when ownership was transferred to *(Archer) St. John,* in 1953. They also specialised in the painted cover, before switching wholeheartedly to the estimable skills of one Matthew "Matt" Baker. *Ziff-Davis* exists to this day, with *ZDNet* as part of its portfolio, as a prosperous internet and media based company.

Last-Ditch!

Lars Of Mars was reprised in July/ August 1951 (**#11**), under a stunning, painted, purple cover. Of the four *Lars* stories, the ten-page *"Terror Weapon"* is the most appealing. *Lars* is summoned and briefed from Mars by *"Interplanetary-Communicator"* to visit *a certain Totalitarian Country.* The terror weapon is a freezing ray, being perfected for evil use by rascally scientist, *Dr. Raskov.* Speeding to confront him, *Lars* is propelled into the fourth and fifth dimensions, by his jet pack. Here, he is confronted by a winged dragon, which when destroyed, turns into myriad copies of himself. Well, you get the idea, anyway! At the end of the final story, he is returning to the studio, *"until the next batch of trouble comes along...."* That could have been it, but in April 1987, *Eclipse Comics* offered a reprise with **Lars Of Mars 3-D (Eclipse 3-D Special no. 19)**. Alongside reprints from the two *Ziff-Davis* originals, it offered a fresh story from Siegel and Anderson, with Jim Mooney inks. The separations for all, supplied by *Mr Three-D* himself, Ray Zone. Fred Burke's text-page gives useful insights into the creators, including the identification of the (painted) cover artist to **#10**, namesake Allen Anderson.

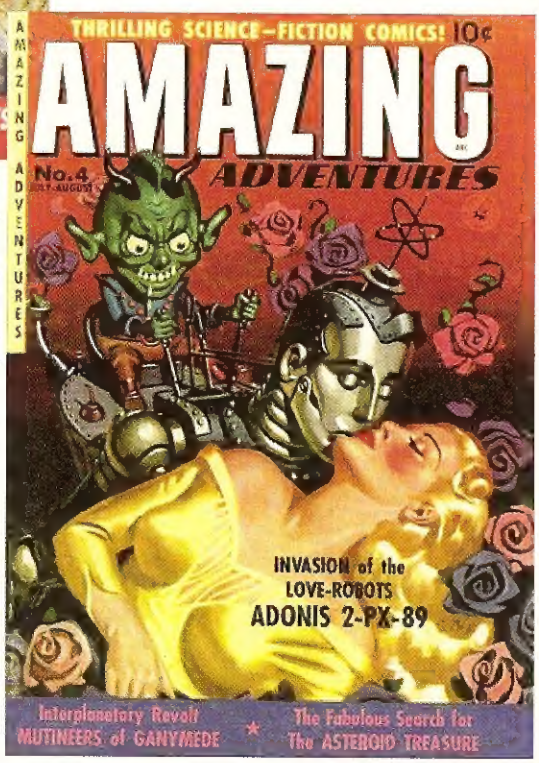




In their final story, *Crusader From Mars, Tarka* and attractive assistant *Zira* travel to the distant planet of *Uralia.* They plan to overthrow its evil dictator, *Boris Zandrozov,* in the evocative *"Beachhead On Saturn's Ring"* (**Crusader From Mars #2**, Fall 1952). Like many space operas, the elaborate set-up takes longer than the dénouement. The lead story has them despatched to Earth by (flying saucer styled) *Disc-craft,* to put an end to the *"Night Of Terror."* Disguised as a business couple, *Alan Wheeler* and secretary *Zira Winters,* they are actually members of the tongue-twisting, Martian based, *Solar System Secret Service Board.* After landing in Pennsylvania, they meet with farmer *Albert Reiner,* who with his neighbours, is being harassed by the sinister *Black Hoods.* After the F.B.I. refuses to act, the *Crusader* springs into action. Demolishing the Klan-styled gang in quick time, he and *Zira* conclude, by flying the ringleader back home for punishment. The evil *Crosby* would end up digging ditches, or as we call them here on Mars, canals...

All information researched and compiled by: Frank Motler, England.

A Fatboy Production February 2005

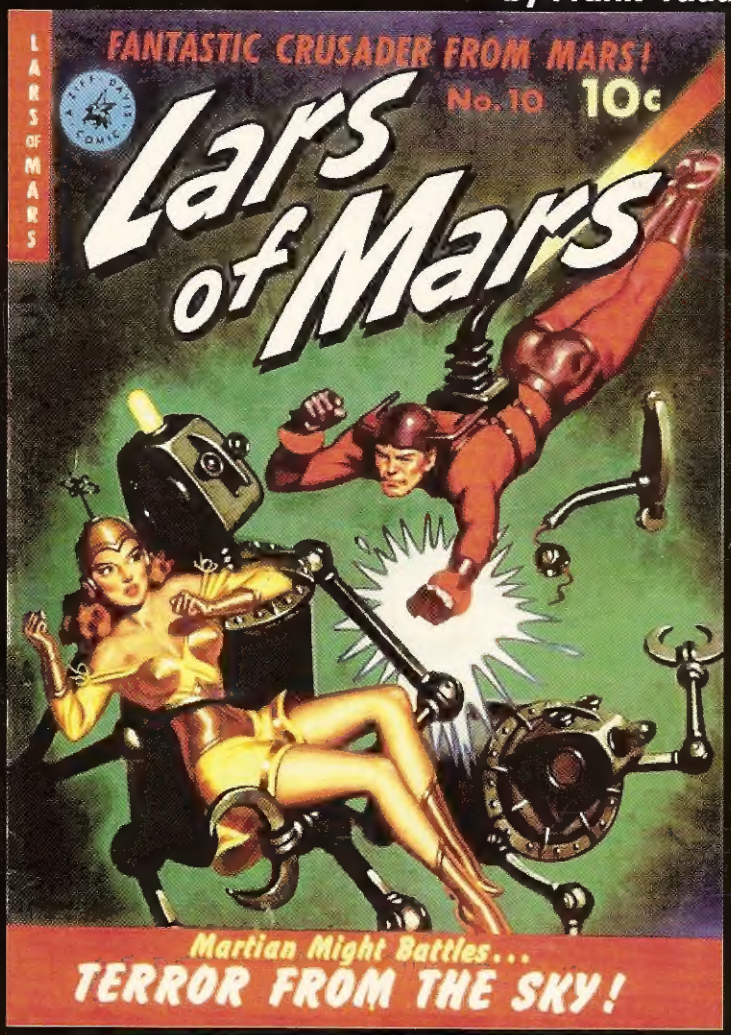


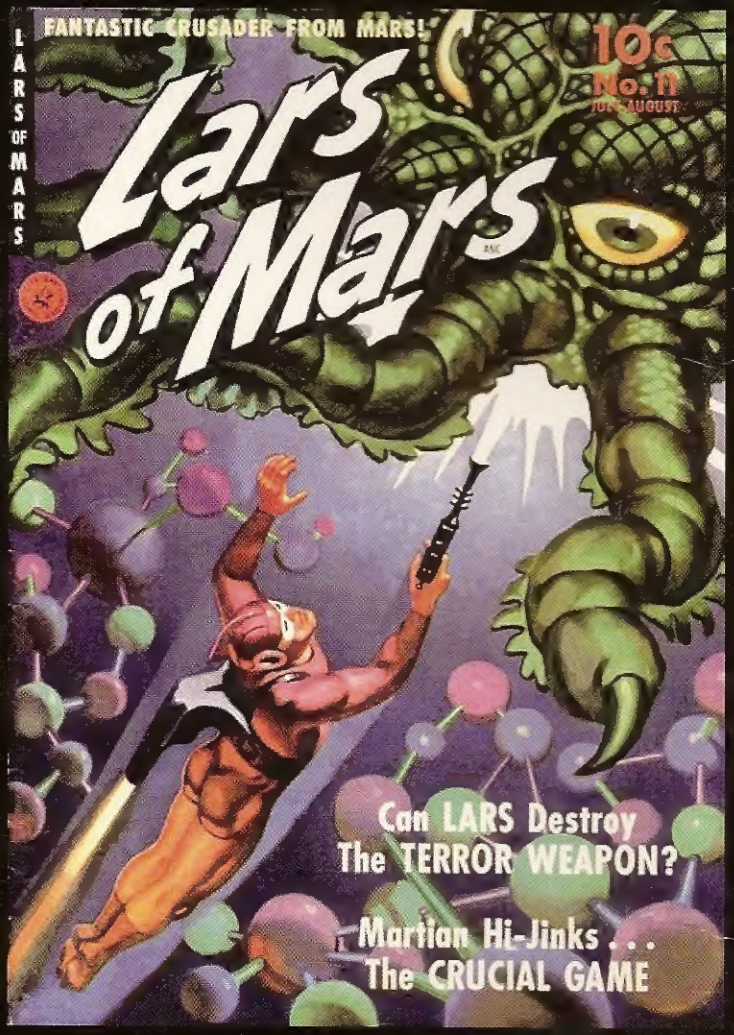
RIVETING!

Bad American Comics Presents

Lars Attacks!

by Frank 'ruddy' Motler





Metal Mania!

Mars-Boy!

No Succour!

After Earth detonates an H-bomb, the *Council of Mars* summons its greatest hero, *Lars.* Exhausted from fighting a tentacled dragon (who wouldn't be?), he is nevertheless despatched by rocket to Earth, as a peace agent. On his peaceful arrival, he rescues the attractive brunette, *June Conway,* by knocking out two menacing robots. However, *Lars* is mistaken, they were only actors and *June,* an on-set television producer. *Lars* is also taken to be a prospective actor, merely dressed up as a spaceman and is promptly hired to promote *Crackety-Wackety* breakfast cereal. In the next adventure, he fares little better, when a criminal gang kidnap him. Recognising him from the TV, they avow *"You're Coming With Us, Mars-Boy!" Lars* goes along with the pretext, knowing he can escape at any time. A robbery takes place, at which *Lars* is slugged unconscious, by the gang. He awakens quickly and unperturbed, saves the fleeing criminals from certain death, before capturing them.

These stories read like *DC's* Strange Adventures, maybe aided by the stylish pencils of Murphy Anderson, which incidentally save them from un-readability. They were written by *Superman's* co-creator, Jerry Siegel. Although this is the first issue, it was entitled Lars Of Mars #10 (April/ May 1951). The skip numbering, designed to allow the groaning comic displays to admit this successful title. Well, it must be, it has reached its tenth issue! Yet, why are we discussing this obscure hero from this unusual publisher? Well, if you've missed all the fuss, this issue of From The Tomb is a *Martian Special* or something? So, pray, continue.

Ziff-Davis

Ziff-Davis produced comic books between 1947 and 1957. The company had been founded in the 1920's by William B. Ziff, Sr. and Bernard G. Davis. They began producing pulps during 1938 and by the mid-1940's they had such titles as Mammoth Adventures, Mammoth Detective, Mammoth Mystery and South Sea Stories. During 1947, a rare subscription item was released, Science Comics #1. The company had released other prototypes (ashcans) before, but this was unusual, in that it contained eight pages of colour comics. A further ashcan was published in 1950, with Amazing Adventures. It proved another comic book and although carrying a 10c cover price, was probably unsolicited. It was produced hastily, no doubt designed to secure the title rights, a companion to the Amazing Stories pulp. *Ziff-Davis* published the latter between 1938 and 1965. It had been in production since 1926, originally from Hugo Gernsback. After an epic run, the finale appeared during 2000. The prototype had a black and white

Continued on Page 71

ISSN 1740-8550
$6.95/E4.95